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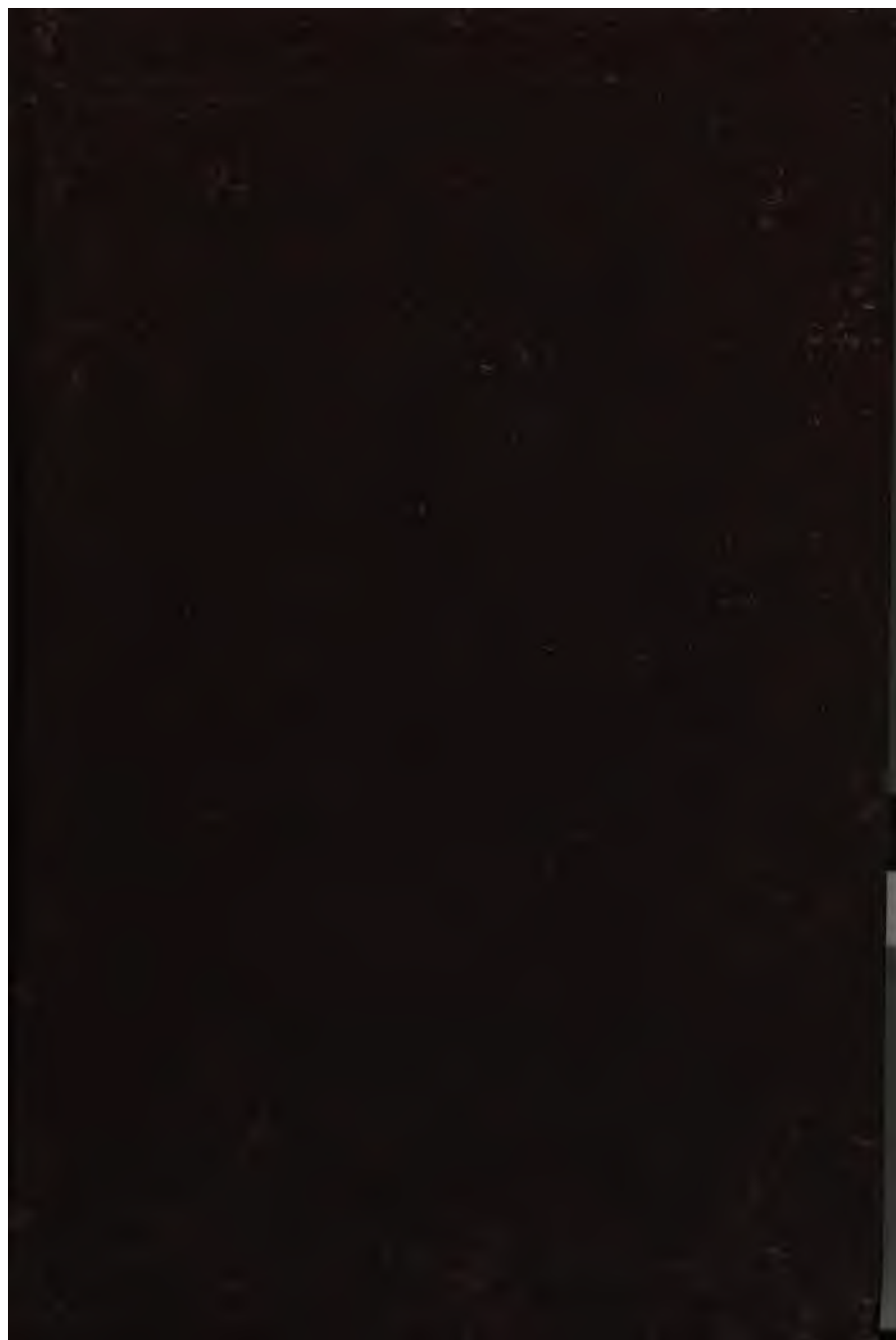
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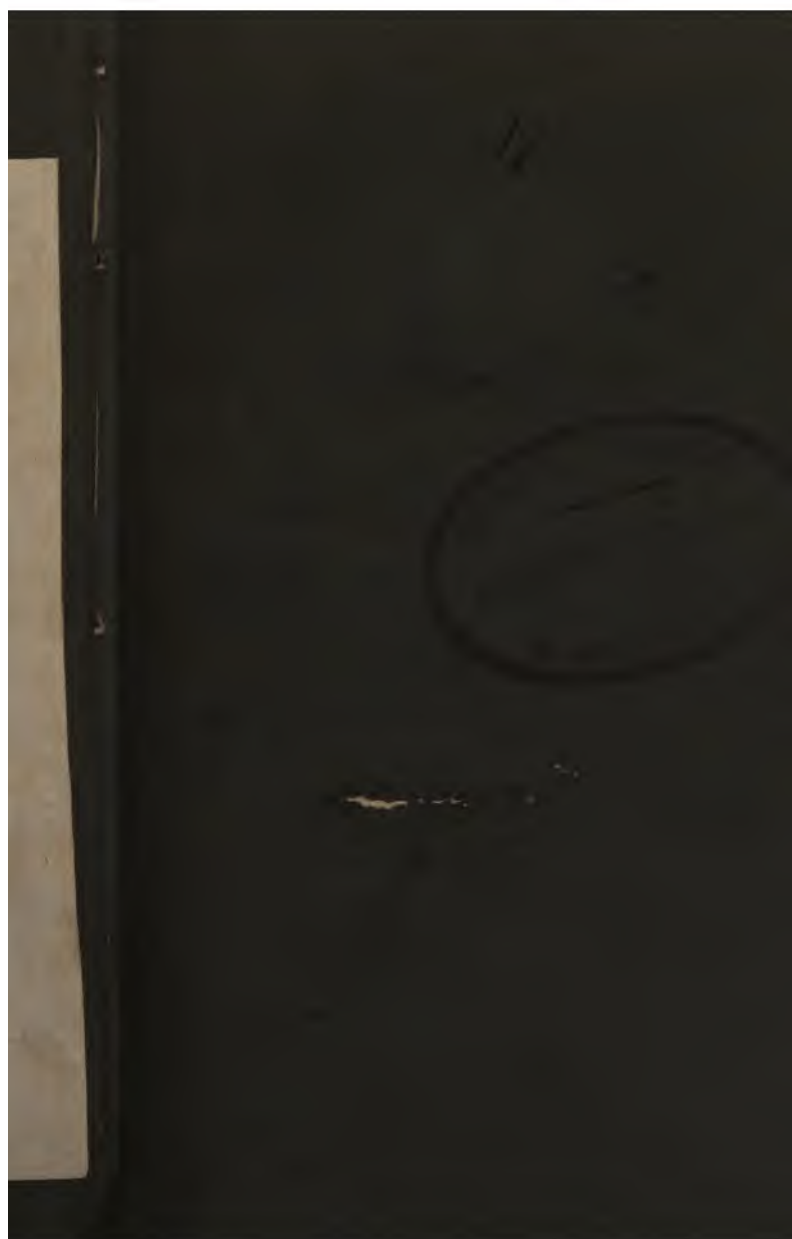
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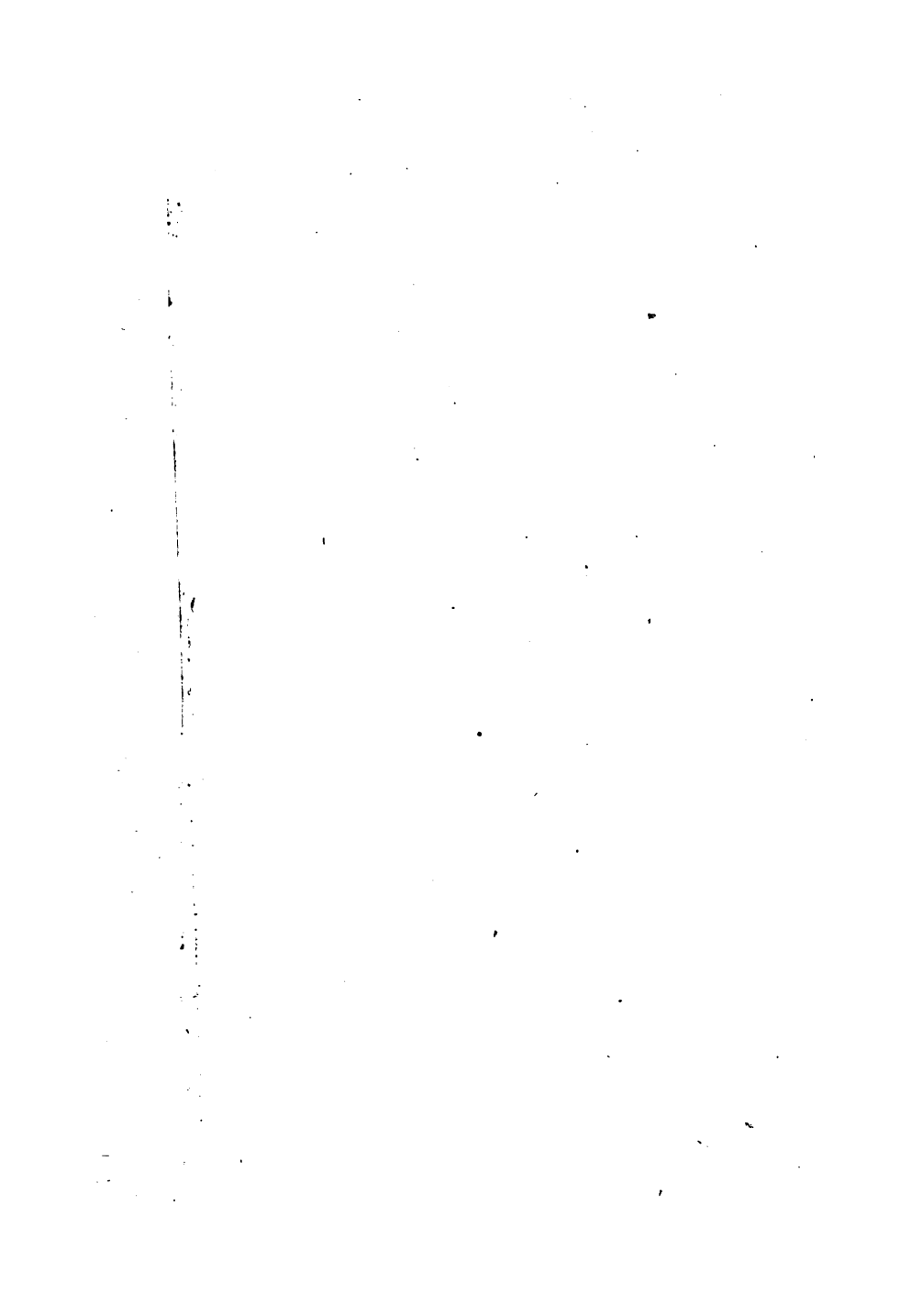
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THE LATEST WORD
OF
UNIVERSALISM.

*THIRTEEN ESSAYS BY THIRTEEN
CLERGYMEN.*



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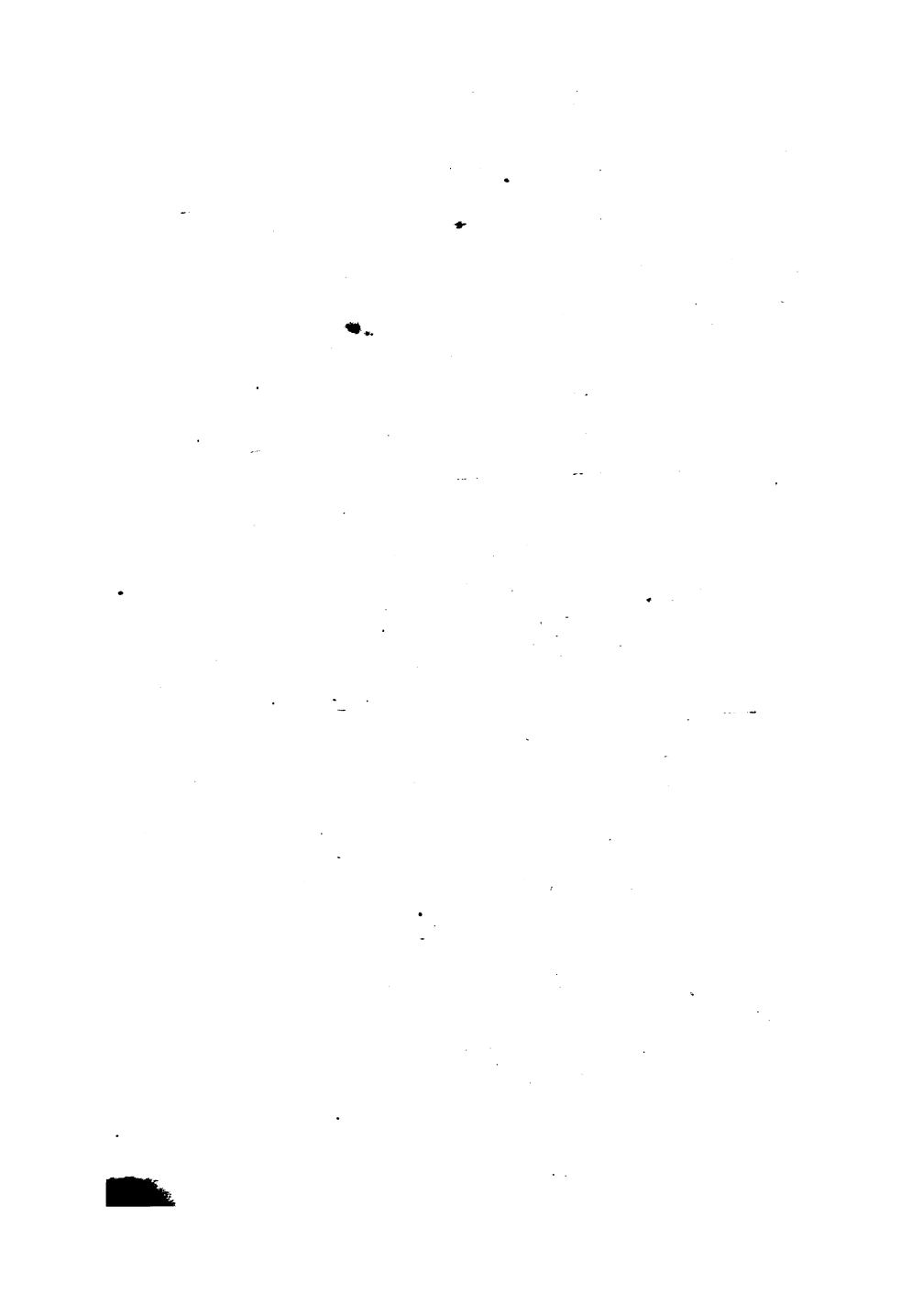


INTRODUCTION.

BY L. M. ATWOOD.

SOME of the topics with which religious discussion is concerned are of ephemeral interest only ; some occupy attention for a considerable period, but at length fail to awaken sympathy ; and some retain their hold on the regards of mankind permanently. The question with which Universalism is historically and dogmatically related, the question of human destiny, is one of perennial and absorbing interest. Into this opinion, however, it may be suspected we are beguiled by a natural partiality for the religious system whose fortunes we follow. For it has been observed that even persons of candor sometimes betray a habit of identifying their own fervors with the emotions of the race. It may be advisable, therefore, to appeal the case from our own tribunal to the more impartial decision of facts.

The first discussion which Christianity provoked on this general subject, related to the truth of its affirmation of an after-death existence. Human immortality was doubted ;



great intolerance. He was industrious and he was relentless. His tyranny and littleness appear in nearly every one of his many writings, and offensively in that which was addressed to his wife. His well-known maxim as a theologian, "*Credo quia impossibile est*," — I believe, because it is impossible, — reveals both the temper of his mind and the animus of his ministry. That such a man should have been the father of the Church's most cherished dogma — or, to state it differently, that the most characteristic intellectual progeny of such a mind should have been adopted by the Church in preference to the benevolent and noble conception of a mind like Origen's, offers one of those moral puzzles which the understanding vainly essays to solve. For whether we explain it by a reference to the crudity and cruelty of the age, or by falling back on the final resource of a Divine though inscrutable purpose, the enigma still confronts and defies human reason.

The vitality of the controversy as to human destiny is, however, the point in illustration. The maladroitness of Tertullian did not settle the question. The curious blending of fiery vehemence and philosophic range in Augustine's nature lent new elements of sublimity to the solemn debate; but they did not close it. The condemnation at length obediently voted against Origenism by Justinian's council (A. D. 544) did not dismiss the con-

troversy. The repressing influence of mingled barbarism and scholasticism, — the incongruous ferment in which the brains of ecclesiastics were steeped for seven hundred years, only availed to keep it smouldering ; it could not put it out. So far as explorations, conducted with this point in view, have been made into the "deep profound" of mediæval literature, it has been discovered that the minds of men were vigorously employed on the great theme of human destiny.¹ It is unnecessary to trace, by even so faint a line as that we must necessarily draw in an introduction, the emergence of the discussion with the revival of inquiry at the Reformation, or to point out how it has steadily held an enlarging place in the controversies of the Church since.

Illustrations nearer at hand, however, may better serve the purpose of effecting conviction. Fortunately, we have two so near to our own time that the materials for their verification are accessible to all. It is a curious phenomenon, and one which would be startling if events could be so shifted as to put dates a century apart side by side, that the dispute which a hundred years ago was wholly between Universalists and "Evangelicals," is now transferred to the very bosom of the Orthodox churches. A Calvinist's enemies are now those of his own religious

¹ For instructive testimony to this point, see articles in the *Universalist Quarterly* for April, July, and October, 1878, from the able author of "The Secret of Christianity."

household. The men who are engaged in pulling down the temple of Orthodoxy are Orthodox men. The books that deal the most remorseless blows at the dogma of Everlasting Punishment are written by Evangelical divines. The guardians of the faith in the older churches have now such absorbing employment in looking after home heretics that those on the outside are left in the enjoyment of monotonous peace. Now, the true explanation of this phenomenon is found in the inherent and irrepressible interest of the question. The attempt to make it subordinate has failed. Orthodoxy is rent as with an earthquake by a controversy it has striven to evade and belittle.

The other illustration is of a different kind, but to the same purport. The Unitarian denomination in this country presents the only example in the history of the Church of a sect that deliberately undertook to ignore the question of human destiny. The question came up before the body as early as the days of Dr. Channing and Andrews Norton. These eminent men and their scarcely less eminent confrères took the position that it is an unimportant matter at the best, and that it is impossible to find out any thing definite or satisfactory in relation to it, any way. The Scriptures, they said, are "silent" as to the fate of those who die unregenerate, and it is folly for men to vex themselves with an inquiry which can never result in any

thing better than conjecture.¹ Dr. Hedge long ago spake of Universalism as "a brave hope," but warned his brethren against exercising any of the courage requisite to avow it. And the official declaration referred to in the preceding note avers: "It is our firm conviction that the final restoration of all men is not revealed in the Scriptures, but that the ultimate fate of the impenitent wicked is left shrouded in impenetrable mystery." If any policy could have availed to keep the controversy out of their communion and preserve them from any effects, good or bad, of the agitation, it would seem that the cautious line marked out by the Unitarian fathers must have secured it. But mark the result. The Unitarian body, ministry and laity, has been carried over, by stress of the compelling interest of the theme, to the ground of universal restoration. The neutrality formerly affected on the subject is now supplanted by a rather coy, but on the whole distinct, affirmation of the "brave hope." It has been found practically impossible either to evade the discussion of this profoundly interesting question, or to prevent the denomination from drifting into avowed Universalism. The obvious reason is, that the question of human destiny is the great question of religion, and will continue so to be until the faith of St. Paul becomes the conviction of mankind, that

¹ Not to refer to individual statements of opinion on the subject, it is more satisfactory to cite the declaration put forth by the American Unitarian Association in 1834, and revised and reaffirmed in 1854.

"the creation also itself shall be set free from the bondage of corruption and brought into the freedom of the glory of the children of God"—that is, that the "glory" enjoyed by the "children of God," or those who already were "led by the Spirit," shall at last be shared by the whole human creation.

If our view of the intrinsic importance and lasting interest of the subject with which Universalism is identified be as well supported as the facts just recited would appear to show, we need not offer an apology for soliciting fresh attention to it by the publication of a new volume on the old theme. The topic itself excuses any sincere effort to bring the high matters with which it is concerned closer to the public apprehension. But special reasons create a demand for a book such as this is believed to be.

Passing by the circumstance that the controversy has broken out anew, both in Europe and in America, and that such a season of general awakening is a favorable moment for the right word to be spoken, we prefer to recall here what is less likely to be remembered. The Universalist branch of the Church was called into being by Divine Providence to pioneer the way back to original Gospel ground on the supreme questions of the character of God, the mission of Jesus, and the destiny of man. It has borne the burden and the heat of the day in the sharp

conflict which its birth precipitated. It has labored, and other churches have entered into its labors. This is the fate of pioneers, and is no more than it had reason to expect. But with the lack of grace proverbial in those who reap from fields they never tilled, there is manifest a disposition to appropriate the harvest without so much as a word in recognition of those who scattered the seed. Contemplated merely as an ethical phenomenon, it is amazing, beyond any thing within the circle of our observation, how unconscious the authors and critics who are overturning the old interpretations on the points in dispute between Evangelicals and Universalists, contrive to be that anybody ever mentioned this before ! The wonder increases when it is considered how exactly these inquirers follow in the footsteps and repeat the expositions of our own authors for half a century and more. It must be difficult, one would say, for so many different men, so widely separated in their work, to keep up the dumb show. Ah ! how refreshing it would be, and what a new sense of the orthodox capacity of justice it would give, to hear some one of them speak out frankly and like a man, and tell how much he and his coadjutors are indebted to the patient and laborious, if not always accurate, research of those pioneer explorers, who, a whole generation in advance of Tayler Lewis, or Lyman Abbot, or Edward Beecher, or Canon Farrar, developed the true interpreta-

tion of the terms whose misreading has been the principal bulwark of the dogma of everlasting punishment. Perhaps, however, it is a trifling thing what we suffer from the injustice or inappreciation of others. The more serious matter to ourselves is, whether we suffer any decline of power or reputation through causes for which we are responsible. If God has called us to a certain service, are we diligently occupied with our Master's business? The little work here offered to the public is a small pledge that Universalists are not insensible to the great honor conferred on them by divine Providence ; but while they thankfully recognize the important aids to the progress of Christian knowledge supplied by sincere and capable inquirers in every branch of the Church, they are as keenly alive as ever to the responsibility devolved on them of bearing aloft and in the van the banner of universal, victorious grace.

But if it could persuade itself to vacate its providential office, and surrender its separate organization, in the belief that its special work is now ready to be wrought in the other churches, it would be denied that relief from arduous and not always agreeable duty, by grave doubts whether the champions of "the larger hope" in the older churches are really quite well equipped to carry on the campaign. No doubt it will savor of conceit in us to say it, nevertheless say it we shall, that the views of those —

with here and there an exception — who are creating such a stir in the church by their half-way advocacy of Universalism, are exceedingly crude. There is very little coherence to their speculations, and nothing approaching to consistency in their methods of exegesis. Their general propositions constantly neutralize their special demonstrations. They accept the very postulates of Orthodoxy that require the false interpretations ; and they are, of course, at a tremendous disadvantage when they undertake to make figs grow on thistles and grapes on thorns. What they still need is a thoroughly reconstructed and harmonized system of opinions. Judging from the rate of evolution among ourselves, under more favorable circumstances, when our theology was in a similar early chaos, we should say that such men as Andrew Jukes and the author of “Is Eternal Punishment Endless?” are a full half century away from a clear and consistent scheme of doctrines in which universal restoration will sit at ease with the rest. As we view the matter, the absence of a congruous theological system from the minds of these writers is a defect of the gravest kind. It renders much of their labor fruitless, and it imperils the permanence of it all. If Universalism, in the persons of its trained apologists, ever had a vocation, it seems to us it is just here : where fancy and impassioned rhetoric are so little ballasted by thorough knowledge and a *complete view*, that the very energy with

which the truth is pursued may be the means of obscuring it.

But a clearer warrant for the further participation of Universalists in the inquiry concerning human destiny remains to be stated. Not only does the inquiry relate to the truth of their fundamental dogma ; not only are the care and direction of the debate providentially devolved on them : but as a progressive people they are aware that the evidence put in on their behalf at previous dates is not now a full and fair statement of their whole case. They must be presumed more competent than any one else to give testimony as to the present state of their knowledge and belief. The title of this volume intimates a comprehension of the true condition of facts. Universalism has spoken again and again in the progress of the great discussion, and many times by the mouth of men so universally honored and confided in that their words were a not unfair expression of the best thought and knowledge among us. It is now, however, some years since any work discussing the whole circle of Christian doctrine, as understood by our church, has appeared. In the mean time that circle has considerably enlarged, while it has also undergone some modifications of its former structure. We are in many respects a different people from what we were twenty years ago. Our habits of thinking have changed with the changing thought of the world. In-

sensibly many of our doctrines, as previously formulated, have recast themselves in our vital theology. Research, in all departments, has come to our aid; and what is better and more important than all other things, we feel at the roots of our opinions the modifying influence of the earnest endeavors we have put forth in these years to advance out of mere denominationalism into genuine, organic church life. It follows that the "latest" word of Universalism should be in many respects a new and refreshing word. Whatever better and truer things remain to be said in subsequent eras of our history, we indulge the hope that the deliverances of this book will be found, on the whole, to report more fully, if not more accurately, the present convictions and the current impulses of the Universalist Church, than any which has preceded it. At the same time, it will be seen that the writers have almost wholly avoided traversing the ground which had been occupied by the special labors of those authors whose works are still of standard authority. In short, "The Latest Word of Universalism" is an impromptu effort by several clergymen, each of whom was too busy to undertake such a work alone, to meet a demand both of the times and of the Universalist public. The plan of it was determined by obvious considerations and need not be explained. The motive which impelled its preparation was the single one of contributing, at the

imperative moment, our church's share to a discussion which, besides its momentous interest to every rational creature, has for its final object the emancipation of the minds of men from moral bondage and the ordering of their lives in harmony with eternal goodness.



THE
LATEST WORD OF UNIVERSALISM.

THE DIVINE NATURE AND PROCEDURE.

BY A. G. GAINES, D.D.

“TO us there is but one God, the Father,” is the answer of the Universalist when questioned as to the ground and support of all religion — the Divine Nature and Procedure. That this answer is true and trustworthy, and that it is supported and confirmed by what is truest and deepest in Science and Philosophy, we shall endeavor briefly to exemplify.

The problem of the universe, as it is now known to exist, cannot be rationally solved unless there is a God who is its creator and governor. If there is a God, personal, intelligent, moral, mighty, free, — capable of original purposes and actions, — it is plain that his existence easily and perfectly solves the problem of the Universe; and this, according to our faith, is the solution of this problem. And that this faith in God is everywhere taught and commended in the *Bible*, no reader of the book will ever think of denying.

But will Science and Philosophy sustain this faith ; or will they even allow us to continue in it? These questions are now pressing every intelligent and thoughtful Christian in the world ; and many fear that we shall soon be forced to answer them in the negative. It is useless to shut our eyes to these questions, and futile to deny their importance. They involve the ground and support of all religion,—the ground and support of all our hopes of immortality and heaven. If our readers will go along with us a little way, with some care and patience, we will point out several respects in which Science and Philosophy warrant and support our faith in God.

I. The operations of *matter* and *energy* cannot solve our problem, and dispense with God,—for they necessitate an original condition of things which they cannot account for ; and which, hence, must be irrationally assumed. By reason of radiation, conduction, friction, &c., taken in connection with the doctrine of the correlation and conservation of energy, there is a constant diffusion and practical dissipation of energy going on,—a constant downward movement towards a uniform, and consequently inert, diffusion of energy throughout matter. That this inert diffusion is not now a fact, proves the necessity of a God rationally to account for those intense energies, actual and potential, now known in the universe. Here, then, physical science not only allows our faith in God ;

but it also shows us a scientific necessity for that faith, if its own problems are to be rationally solved.

II. The problem of *life*, and of individual characteristics and character, cannot be solved by any mere evolution of germ-cells, even were it possible (as it is not) to explain these germs without a God. These germ-cells are too minute, and comparatively too simple, to furnish a rational groundwork for the explanation of the infinitely varied and complicated facts of life as it is actually known. The minuteness and simplicity of the germs, contrasted with the amazing variety and complexity of living beings, necessitates and warrants our faith in God as the rational explanation. If, to escape this conclusion, it were (however absurdly) alleged that there is an adequate infinite complexity in the minutest germ, our answer would be, that *such a germ* would as much necessitate a God to explain it as the vaster complexities of the universe itself. That in this view we have the support of scientific men, take the following in confirmation from Prof. Clerk Maxwell, a very high authority in physical science. He says: "Thus, molecular science sets us face to face with physiological theories. It forbids the physiologist from imagining that structural details of infinitely small dimensions can furnish an explanation of the infinite variety which exists in the properties and functions of the most minute organisms. A microscopic

germ is, we know, capable of development into a highly organized animal. Another germ, equally microscopic, becomes, when developed, an animal of a totally different kind. Do all the differences, infinite in number, which distinguish the one animal from the other, arise each from some difference in the structure of the respective germs? . . . To explain differences of function and development of a germ without assuming differences of structure is, therefore, to admit that the properties of a germ are not those of a purely material system.”¹ Thus, again, Science, in its profoundest and subtlest truths, leads us to God, and warrants and supports our faith in him.

By a similar procedure we might draw arguments for our faith in God from the *plurality* of the elements of matter, and from their various known properties and relations; but the limited space at our command allows us to do no more than thus allude to them, and recognize their existence, and the place they should occupy.

Philosophy is equally generous in affording confirmation and support to our faith that God is.

I. Our attention has been often called to the difficulty of conceiving an absolute beginning of the order of Nature; and this difficulty has been urged as a reason why we should disbelieve such a beginning, — why we should disbelieve in God as the creator, originator. But, if we

¹ Encyclopædia Britannica, art. *Atom*.

attend to it, it at once becomes plain, as Sir W. Hamilton explains, that an endless regression of effects and causes is just as inconceivable ; and must, therefore, by this sort of reasoning, be condemned as equally unbelievable and false. The one inconceivable thus cancels the other ; and we are left free to consider and accept the proper evidence that the order of Nature had a beginning, and that God is, and that he is the original cause.

Now, a little attention to our own experience will show us that origination is not so difficult to our thinking as it is assumed to be in the objection. Men, as free agents, are familiar with the originating of purposes and actions ; are familiar with this, — that many results in life find their explanation in men's original purposes and free actions. This familiar experience enables us fully to believe in God as the creator ; and, accordingly, men in all ages have so believed. It also somewhat qualifies us to comprehend how it may be, and thus makes it still easier to human faith. And thus it is seen that Philosophy not only allows our faith in God, but it also very plainly encourages it.

II. At the very beginnings of our knowledge, and affording the materials of all philosophy, we have matter and mind given in immediate co-existence and contrast. We stultify the grounds of all knowledge and of all philosophy, when we make either matter or mind, as known to us, a mere mode or sequence of the other. This is not saying

that matter is eternal ; nor that God could not, or did not, create matter, as he unquestionably created the order of Nature. It is saying that matter, when created, is no more a mode of mind than mind is a mode of matter. Both as known in actual existence stand in co-existence and contrast. Now, note that mind with its thoughts, feelings, and volitions is a conspicuous portion of the problem of the universe ; and it must find a rational and sufficient explanation. To assign matter, — or any of the laws of matter, or any mere evolution of matter and its laws, — as the cause and explanation of mind, is to belie the grounds of all knowledge and of all philosophy. Hence, the rational God is again warranted and supported by Philosophy as the only conceivable cause and explanation of mind as we know it to exist. If any are disposed to question the validity of this argument, let them proceed to show how, and upon what grounds, we can know any thing, after it has been denied that we know immediately matter and mind in co-existence and in contrast of substance. This will not be done ; and we therefore reassert this highest philosophical warrant for our faith that God is.

Having thus briefly indicated how well assured we may be that the faith that God is, is well grounded so far as Science and Philosophy are concerned, let us now go on and inquire what we may know, and what we may believe,

of the Divine nature. And here, first of all, the *Bible* gives us a *personal* God ; and the Universalist believes in a personal God. This faith is also supported by such other knowledge as we have attained to. We know absolutely nothing of mind apart from personality. We know mind in many conditions and relations ; but in every condition and relation it is individual, it is personal. To suppose that mind, individual and personal as we know it to be at all times and everywhere, could arise out of what is neither personal nor individual, is to stultify reason and causation at once. To state such assumptions is not to explain any thing, but it is to insult intelligence itself. Inasmuch, therefore, as mind is personal, the Creator — the cause of mind — is personal ; and we may know that God is personal in a sense as distinct and certain as minds are personal.

Strong confirmation of this is afforded by the oneness of plan, and character, and procedure, observed everywhere in the universe ; and this oneness finds its ground and explanation at once in the personal God, the Creator and Governor of the universe.

By a similar line of thought we confirm our faith in God as intelligent, rational. We may everywhere observe the adaptations of things to each other, and of means to ends, attesting thought and design in the Creator. We may also observe remoter ends pursued and promoted by

subtile and complex adjustments of means, some of which at first sight even seem to us subversive of the ends they actually promote ; and this impresses us with the forethought and far-seeing intelligence of God. And to all this may be added all the intelligence, skill, and wisdom found in man, and exhibited by him ; for God is his créator, and as the rational cause is always superior to the effect, these effects in man attest the superior intelligence and wisdom of God. By what we thus know ourselves to be, we know that God is personal, intelligent, wise.

We may assert on equally good grounds that God is moral, holy, righteous, just. These qualities are all found in man, and by reason of them he is subject to a peculiar law, — a law to which other creatures known to us are not subject : we call it the moral law. This law is everywhere potent in human affairs : man cannot divest himself of its influence. It is a peculiar law, in that it spurns necessity, and all pleas of necessary causation. It stands in the presence of Nature and of Nature's laws ; in the presence of what is, and boldly says that it ought not to be. By all the laws of ordinary and natural causation, the what is, as the necessary and legitimate sequence of its causal antecedents, has the best of reasons for being, and for being what it is. But here is something condemning it in a new language as *wrong*, as having no right to be. Whence comes this peculiar law thus

wrought into the whole texture of human life? One only answer can be given,—it is of God; and hence we may know that God is moral, just, holy.

After what has now been shown of the intelligence, holiness, and personality of God, it seems needless to do more than state the obvious proposition that God is powerful, mighty,—the *Scriptures* say Almighty. Proofs and illustrations of this are to be seen everywhere, from “the wind that bloweth where it listeth,” to the rolling worlds and suns that fill the immensity of space.

We have also said that God is free; that he is an original power and will, capable of original purposes and actions. These may be said to be essential attributes of Divine personality; and any power or force that did not possess them, whatever some men might fancy to call it, would not, and could not, fulfil our notion of God. These qualities, too, are so familiar in our experience; we know so well what it is to form original purposes, and pursue them by voluntary means,—what it is to will, and what it is to act,—that any conception of God which denied him these attributes, would be at once rejected as absurd. Here, then, we sum up and repeat our steadfast faith in God, as the mighty God,—rational, personal, moral, original, and free; and we give both reason and revelation as our instructors and guides in this faith.

We desire to go a little farther into this subject, and

inquire whether we may not claim to *know* God in a true and comprehensible sense. In this inquiry it must not be forgotten that, "spiritual things are spiritually discerned;" and, we may add, that spiritual things can only be spiritually discerned. This truth, in both its forms, is very familiar in our daily experience; and no man distrusts to call it knowledge, or hesitates to act on it as knowledge. For example: the living, thinking, willing being we know ourselves to be, was never seen by the fleshly eyes of our friends, nor can we be thus seen; and we, in turn, never with material eyes saw our friends as minds, souls. But we do daily, hourly, discern each other mentally, spiritually; and we know and test the identity of our friends spiritually, with as great assurance as we know and test the identity of their bodies. Nor can this be said to be through the body, or, properly, to depend on the body; for the body may be disguised, and every bodily feature mutilated, until identification of the body is impossible, and still the mind will reveal itself unmistakably to the minds of our friends. Recall the story of Blondel, the minstrel friend of King Richard I., going in search of his lost and imprisoned lord. At last the minstrel came to a castle in which he suspected his friend was confined, but he could get no information to support or confirm his suspicions. But one day he took a station in front of that part of the castle supposed to be the

prison, and sang and played the first half of a little ballad which he and King Richard had composed together years before. He paused, and was immediately answered from within the prison by the other half of the same ballad, with the same musical accompaniment. Imagine the joy of the minstrel, for he had found his friend and king ! He hastened home to England, and reported where the king was confined ; and this led to Richard's release and restoration to his kingdom. Blondel knew it was his lord ; but you see it was through mind speaking to mind when no bodily form could be seen. Facts and experiences of this kind are so common and so familiar to us, that it is needless to dwell upon them.

However, the application of these familiar truths to our knowledge of God is important, and worthy of being drawn out a little. We may, I think, hold that we *know* that God is, and that we may have some very trustworthy and encouraging knowledge of him ; and in this statement the word "knowledge" is used thoughtfully and advisedly. It is written that "the pure in heart see God ;" and it is true, and realized in actual spiritual discernment. The pure in heart perceive and understand the language of holiness ; and it is as holy, that they more especially see God. But the intelligent, thinking God speaks to our minds in all the ways mind speaks to mind ; and we thus know that God is, and that he is all that his expressed

thought implies, in the same way that we know that our fellow-men are, and that they are rational, willing, loving souls, with such and such characters.

This expression of God's thought and character is exemplified nearly everywhere. Take an example from the human heart. Can any man look into the ventricles of this organ, and observe the construction of the mitral and tricuspid valves, with the tendinous chords attached to them, and running across these cavities and attached to the summits of papillary muscles on the opposite sides, — can any one observe these things, and note the ends served, and so admirably served; by these means, and not discern the wise constructive thought that speaks through them? If he attends reverently to this language, he will discern it as God's thought, and he will be thus brought spiritually face to face with God. He will discern it as *God's* thought, for well he knows that it is not man's thought, and never could be. He sees no material form, and hears no sound in sense; but he reads God's thought as Blondel read King Richard's, and his assurance and his joy are as great. Who, again, can look into the wonderful mechanism of the human ear, and not clearly discern the thought of the Divine architect? From the skilful adjustment of the bones joining the membranous tympanum to the membrane that closes the oval window, to the ramifications of the auditory nerve in the cochlea,

and membranous labyrinth, with the means therein for acting on these terminal nerves, — this human ear speaks the thought and purpose of the God who made it. And what is true of the heart and the ear, is true in like manner of myriads of things that express God's thought and purpose ; and we may assert here knowledge of God on a footing exactly analogous to that on which we assert knowledge of men.

Our friends, the archæologists, who dig up the sites of buried and forgotten cities ; who rake over old shell mounds, and dredge the bottoms of lakes and bogs ; who explore old caves, and dens of wild beasts, and turn up the strata of the earth, in their search after human remains and relics, — these men are right in saying their rude findings — even their flint chips — speak knowledge to them of the existence and the thoughts of men of those forgotten times. Yes, they are right ; for mind speaks to mind by the simple flint chips, and it is understood. But how much more does God nearly everywhere speak to our minds ; and by a language so much fuller and clearer than the flint chips and implements of the archæologist ! Who will say, then, that we do not so much the more certainly *know* that God is, and that he is very near to every one of us ? Yes, God is ; and the universe, and all its parts, relations, and adaptations, express his will and thought : and all these things that are made are what

they are because God, the creator, is what he is. Thus it is that the *nature* of God is the ground and explanation of the universe in its essential constitution, relations, and ends ; and were it conceivable that God might have been essentially different from what he is, then the universe would never have been what it is. Because God embodies infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, these attributes are nearly everywhere exemplified in the universe. We do not say that we know that these attributes must be exemplified in the world, because we first know them to be attributes of God. To do this were to proceed by a method of deduction that cannot be made trustworthy : deduction from assumed premises in the infinite to what we conclude must be the Divine procedure in the finite affairs of this world. What we do maintain is, that because power, wisdom, and goodness are clearly revealed in the things that are made, we may know that they are attributes of him who made the worlds. And we say that we thus *know* that God is wise and good, because these attributes are clearly expressed to us in line upon line in his works. That this is no doubtful assertion of knowledge may be illustrated as follows : Were I to travel abroad and arrive at some to me unknown and unheard of country, nearly the first inquiries to which I should address myself would be, Is there any government in this country ? If so, what is its character ? Is it wise, just, humane ?

Now it is easy to understand that I might prosecute these inquiries by looking about me, and intelligently observing what was done in connection with the several sorts of conduct of men, and how it was done. Nor will any man doubt in the least that, after I had prosecuted these inquiries for some years under ordinarily favorable conditions for seeing and understanding what was to be seen, I might well say, without undue assumption of wisdom, that I *know* this government to be powerful, wise, and just ; or that it possesses, or does not possess, these qualities in such and such degrees. And note, too, that, in arriving at this knowledge, it has not been assumed, nor implied, that any part of it was obtained from oral communications and written documents ; and mark, also, that we *know* not only that the government *is*, but we know its *character* as well.

In a way precisely analogous to this, we say that we *know* that God is, and that he is powerful, wise, and good. In making this plain to such as may have doubted it, we pass over that personal revelation of himself which God makes to the individual soul ; for though this revelation is most convincing to the individual himself, it is not available for the convincing of others.

We ask, now, whether any man can live in this world, and look intelligently about him for years, and not observe expressions of God's power, wisdom, and goodness nearly

everywhere? Whoever observes with any active thoughtfulness sees the power of God revealed superabundantly : through the embodiment and action of various agents, indeed, but so manifestly not an original power with these agents, that in all ages and everywhere man has known and called it divine. In like manner do men know God as wise, through the multiplied expressions of his wisdom in his works. A few men have lived in the world who could charge God with folly ; or, at least, with want of wisdom in some part of his works. Even these men understood many of the lessons of God's wisdom, and stumbled only in a few instances ; and hence they do not deny that God is generally known as wise, but that he is universally so known. As to the charge itself, it involves such assumptions of knowledge and wisdom, and concerning the whole meaning and ends of things, on the part of him who makes the charge, that it becomes a mark rather of his weakness and rashness than of his superiority to the generality of men.

And nearly the same things may be said of the goodness of God, expressed in so many relations, with means to ends so well fitted to lead his creatures to perfection, and secure good to them. As we thoughtfully dwell upon these expressions of God's benevolence, and seek to interpret them, we reach as great assurance of knowledge that God is good, and delighteth in doing good, as

we previously had of the *character* of the government of the unknown country we visited. The government or procedure of God in this world as plainly reveals his character for wisdom, power, and goodness to the intelligent student, as any government among men ; or as any individual man reveals his character to such a student. And inasmuch as we go upon assured practical knowledge in these last cases, so may we with equal certainty in the first.

Those who stumble concerning the Divine goodness in particular instances, do so usually from looking too exclusively at their individual happiness — and this as immediately affected — without considering the more general welfare, or even their own good in the wider view of character and immortality. This is to imitate the little child that assumes to condemn the treatment it receives from its parents by its own fancies, tastes, and pleasures of the hour. No thoughtful student of God's works, who duly appreciates his own imperfections of knowledge and character, will fail to exclaim with St. Paul, " Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out ! " No such student will ever think of proposing amendments to either the wisdom or goodness of God's works ; nor will he doubt that he knows God, or that the God he knows is both wise and good.

We have space that will permit us to draw only a few inferences from the principles now laid down ; and first of all take this : Inasmuch as we are able to say on good and trustworthy grounds that God is mighty, we are warranted both by the Scriptures and by Philosophy to go on and infer that he is *Almighty*. We accept this inference, and find confirmation of our faith in the facts of the material universe ; and in the facts and experiences, also, of the mental and spiritual realms. We have not said, • and we shall not say, that we *know* God *as* Almighty, for such knowledge transcends our powers ; but we do know him as mighty, and we have *faith* in him as Almighty. In like manner we know that God is wise. We see and understand in a thousand things and relations the wisdom in which he reveals himself, and we do not hesitate to assert our knowledge. Now we go further, and infer his omniscience. This inference, too, is well grounded, and we assert undoubting *faith* in God's infinite wisdom.

It is by a procedure in all respects similar that we infer, beyond our knowledge that God is good, that his goodness is perfect. By perfect goodness we understand that which is good in every purpose and act of him who is thus good. We *know* that God is good in many of his purposes and acts ; and now, by the authority of the *Bible* and of all that we otherwise know of the universe, we have *faith* that he is perfectly good, — good in every pur-

pose and act. While, therefore, we *know* that God is powerful, wise, and good, by *faith* we worship him as almighty, all-wise, and perfect in goodness : and this faith has the warrant of the Scriptures, and of the soundest Philosophy.

Another inference that may be drawn from all that we know of God, is his constant activity in the affairs of the universe ; and, more especially, in all that part of it which includes man, and the things pertaining to man. Wisdom implies care, thoughtfulness, deliberation in all purposes and in the pursuit of them. And goodness has no meaning, if it does not imply a care for and attention to whatsoever things affect the well-being of the objects of this goodness. Hence, God, as wise and good, has an ever active interest and care for the good of his creatures ; but more especially for *man*, whom he has peculiarly endowed, and subjected to a peculiar law. This ever present activity and thoughtfulness of the Divine wisdom and goodness assures us that all God's purposes and acts relative to man are benevolent in design and effective in execution. We are not able to go beyond this, and deduce how God will act in this or that particular case, or how he will deal with this or that particular man in such and such particular circumstances. When we attempt deductions like these, we approach dangerously near to presumption, and are too apt to become fault-finders before

God. But our faith is warranted and trustworthy, that, whether or not we can see through the particular act or providence to the intention and end of Divine goodness, it is none the less certainly good. By faith we accept this inference, and "Praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men," even when we fail to see through his methods to the Divine consummation.

Again, we infer from what we know of God's holiness, and of his moral government, and of the law written in the consciences of men, that he hates sin, and can have no concord with it, or with the works it prompts. This knowledge of God's holiness has abundant support everywhere, and will not be called in question by any; and, granting the premises, our conclusion cannot be denied. This is a most important inference of the Divine procedure, and will bear a little amplification. Our inference, then, makes it plain that God is in no sense the author or abettor of sin. God never planned it, nor did he ever purpose aught that required sin as a means for its accomplishment, or that depended on sin as a means to its end. Sin is of God in no proper sense. His whole relation to it, and action towards it, is and ever has been antagonism, resistance. And this accords perfectly with what we know of ourselves as the authors of our own sins. In consciousness we know ourselves to be the sinners; we are

tempted and we sin, and by just consequence experience the *guilt* of sin. All this is personal knowledge to men as sinners, and we know that our sins are not of God. When God created man with a moral nature, which only made it possible for man to sin, he subjected him to the moral law and forbade him to sin. God also warned man of the consequences of disobedience, — warned him that he would resist and punish whomsoever should turn into the ways of iniquity. God has kept his word, and been true to holiness in all his dealings with sinners. He hates sin, and he resists and punishes it ; and by an active and benevolent providence he has wrought to save sinners, to make an end of sinning, and to bring men to virtue and peace with God. So much we may know of the Divine procedure in relation to sin and sinners. God is hostile to sin ; he has no purposes to serve by it ; never gave his consent to it ; forbade it at the first, and has steadfastly resisted it ever since ; and he has assured us that he can never accept it, nor become reconciled to it. All this means that there shall be an end of it in the moral universe. God's power, wisdom, goodness, and holiness are all assured pledges of this result ; for, as God lives, sin must be ended, and universal righteousness brought in : and this good work is going forward under his ever active providence.

Here, then, our inferences from the goodness and holi-

ness of God run up together into the assured prophecy and promise that sin shall be destroyed through the conversion and salvation of all sinners, and the ultimate bringing of them to holiness and perfection. This shows us God as the Father revealed in Jesus Christ. Thus our inquiries lead us on from the knowledge of God as holy, just, and good, to the recognition and worship of him as the Father, of whom and to whom are all things. And so we conclude where we began, by repeating that as Universalists, "To us there is but one God, the Father."

HUMAN NATURE, ITS CAPABILITIES.

BY J. H. TUTTLE, D.D.

THE oracle who, when asked by Chilo, "What is of all things the best?" answered, "Know thyself," might have made the same reply if the question had been, "What is of all things the most difficult?" And yet as there is nothing with which we have lived longer, nor on more intimate terms, than with ourself, what ought we to know more thoroughly? But this nearness to the prime object of knowledge is perhaps one of the causes of our ignorance, since we are apt to suppose the most interesting things are farthest off. Curiosity is dulled by constant contact with its object. "We take more notice of other ships than of the one on which we are sailing."

Besides, the conditions under which the mind apprehends its own states and powers render self-knowledge, difficult; for in this case the knower and the things to be known are the same. To obtain self-knowledge it seems to be necessary that the knowing faculty should be capable of detaching itself partially, for the moment, from other parts of the mind, and holding them off in favorable

perspective ; and how is such a mental feat possible ? Were they intellectually endowed, how could the ocean report its own ebb and flow, and the clock describe its own mechanism ? However, "that the soul does know itself," says President Porter, "and confides in the knowledge thus attained, will be acknowledged by every one." How this is accomplished is not for us, but for the metaphysician and psychologist, to ascertain. The above author says also, "No real knowledge of the soul is gained except by turning the gaze inward." The qualities and powers of human nature are such, of course, as we find to be common to mankind ; that is, such as we have discovered, first in ourselves, and afterwards met with everywhere in the world about us. Certain other persons who have the rare gift of interpretation and of expression may describe our thoughts and feelings better than we ; but we must first know what they are, before we can be sure they are described correctly. "Come," said the Samaritan woman, "see a man which told me all things that I ever did : is not this the Christ ?" He held the mirror up before her ; she saw the reflection and recognized herself. Shakspeare, the most marvellous of all uninspired delineators in this department of knowledge, sketches little for us that we have not experienced ; and because we have experienced it, we know it to be the truth. He addresses us intelligently, because he writes out of himself.

Comprehensively, human nature is Man — Man in his several parts, and in his sum total. Hence a mighty task is assigned to him who is asked to make but the simplest diagram of the subject before us. Only a few outlines are possible, in any ordinary space: the sketch might be suggestive, if properly drawn; the filling up must be left to the intelligent reader.

Foremost among the characteristics of human nature is its Oneness.

The statement of Paul to the Athenians from the summit of the Areopagus, that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men," is abundantly verified by facts collected from the history of mankind. The reports from all quarters of the globe, and from all ages of the world, touching this matter, form a mass of concurrent testimony favoring the doctrine of a common human brotherhood too formidable to be resisted by any but the most sceptical. It does not seem important, so far as this doctrine is concerned, whether the human race originated in one pair or in several pairs; nor whether the evolution theory be correct, — since the universal identity of blood might have been preserved in either case. We have but one Father, whatever may have been the process, or processes, which brought us into being. The Divine energy from which we sprang, however remote or however near in its beginning, and however much it may have separated and

meandered in those intervals preceding our conscious existence, could have had but one source. This is evident, since human nature everywhere presents one organism, one schedule of wants, tendencies, properties, and desires. Whether we touch humanity in Asia, Africa, Europe, or America, we touch the same thing. A thin alluvium of individualism covers each one of us, but beneath is the primitive rock on which we were all built. The external differences, — such as complexion, language, habits, pursuits, and even the slight modifications of physical form which occur through the influence of climate and manner of living, — are not human nature, any more than the hat and clothes a man wears are the man himself. We have the authority of the author of Locksley Hall for saying, —

“In the spring, a fuller crimson comes upon the robin’s breast ;
In the spring, the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest,” —

but this donning of brighter vernal costumes does not interfere with the internal character of these birds. The enlarged thyroid gland observed among certain Swiss peasantry has not separated its unfortunate wearers from the brotherhood of neighboring folk, who by a more favorable locality have escaped this physical infliction. Nor are the mental, social, moral, and religious diversities exhibited, proof against the oneness of human nature ; since these also are produced by corresponding differences of

locality, education, opportunities for culture, &c. That which stunted the body of the Labrador Indian induced at the same time a dwarfing of his intellect. The circumstances which placed the Feejee on his South Sea island, kept him from opportunities which might have given him the culture and polish of a son of Harvard College. Chronology and Geography together can account for much of the difference between the Fetichism of certain African tribes and the Christianity of New England. If certain low tribes of people have been discovered (as is alleged) by Lubbock and others, in whom traits of character generally considered essential to human nature appear to be wanting, — such, for instance, as morality, religion, a perception of right and wrong, — we suggest, in reply to this, that these are simply cases where the attributes referred to are still latent. Some plants do not blossom until the second or third year, — the Century plant, as its name indicates, until after a great number of years, — but the germ of the flower is present from the start.

Modern facilities for travel, for becoming acquainted with foreign countries, have awakened an immense interest in Ethnology and Ethnography, and opened a way also for comparing one people with another, both as they now appear, and have appeared, since the earliest records ; and the result, we feel safe in saying, has been a complete surprise to most persons, in the parallels, likenesses, and

even samenesses it shows. The mass of relics gathered from the ruins of Babylon and Nineveh, from Egyptian tombs, from the ashes of Pompeii, from Ilium and Cyprus, and from Indian mounds in America, prove, when compared with things now in use, to have been constructed and employed by peoples who lived and thought, enjoyed and suffered, loved and hated, very much as the present inhabitants of the earth do. The kitchens in Herculaneum were hung with utensils our modern house-servants might readily recognize. Diomedes's children played with toys our juveniles are familiar with. The courts of Sennacherib, the halls of Sardanapalus, suggest that these Assyrian monarchs were cast in the same mould with the present rulers of Turkey and Egypt. The personal ornaments of which Helen and Andromache were proud, would seem hardly out of place in the modern boudoir of a French or Spanish queen.

The oneness of human nature is indicated also in the common interest of mankind in the same literature, sentiments, appeals to passion, and the like. The legends, stories, proverbs, poetic conceptions, current among any people now, seem to have originated in kindred sources, to have descended from remote periods, and to have drifted about always as universal property.

Investigations in Philology demonstrate a vast and intimate fellowship of languages. Various nations come for-

ward to share in the originality of nearly every invention. Every great thought has so many claimants that the wisest chancery of critics is puzzled to decide to whom it belongs. We imagine we have at last hit upon a new idea, but some erudite Cesnoli by and by drags it forth from the dust of centuries, and offers it to a museum of intellectual antiquities. So the world ever "hums the old well-known air through innumerable variations."

"Speak your latest conviction," says Emerson, "and it shall be the universal sense." Dante wrote this "universal sense" in his poems; Shakspeare in his plays; Dickens in his novels; even Howard Payne in his "Sweet Home." Raphael painted it in his Madonnas; Angelo carved it in stone. The author of *Oliver Twist* gathered his characters from the streets of London, but they answer as well for New York or Boston. The perfume of the pudding at Bob Cratchit's Christmas dinner is not more like the flavored effervescence which rises from our tables on this festival day, than the human nature of Dickens's books is like human nature all over the world. The passions which appear on the stage of any really classical romance, act the life of universal humanity; and universal humanity applauds or condemns.

What hopes are to be based on the oneness of human nature? Why should we desire to believe this doctrine rather than the opposite?

If assured of the oneness of human nature, we always know exactly, no matter where we meet mankind, what we have to deal with ; that is, we know we are dealing always with the same thing, and that what is predicated of one portion of the race may be of another. If human nature be one, then one key unlocks all hearts. The same ethics, the same religion, the same methods of education, answer for all ; the same Saviour may save all. To handle one mind is to have caught the secret of managing the masses. To elevate one soul is to have begun a process which, if wisely applied and perseveringly continued, must lift society finally to its proper place. As he himself, the chief of sinners, had been saved, Paul saw the way was clear for saving his fellow-race ; for, placed in the same range with "all men," the influences which were sweeping him toward heaven must carry them along also. The oneness of human nature could hardly have escaped his attention when he wrote : "There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling : one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism ; one God and Father of all." It is as much a mistake to suppose Christianity was a new religion, as to suppose human nature was changed at Christ's birth. Externally the Mosaic and Christian dispensations differed ; internally they were identical : Love was the essence of both. Love is an eternal principle in God, and appeals to an eternal faculty in man : to a universal faculty also.

We reason from the oneness of human nature that what the most advanced man, or most advanced nation, has attained is attainable by all men and all nations. Paul, Marcus Aurelius, Milton, Luther, Agassiz, and thousands of other geniuses whose names shine in the galaxy of history, were endowed with no faculties which God has not given to every one of his children : they grew out of the soil in which all men have been planted. We each shared in the inexpressible pride and delight resulting from an examination of the Exposition at Philadelphia, because we felt that it was the fruit of forces common to us all ; we turned away from the magnificent spectacle, even the humblest of us, with new faith in man, and therefore with new faith in ourselves ; with new resolves to apply ourselves more earnestly in a world of such universal gifts. Emerson calls attention to the remark of some one who said : " When I read Homer, all men seem like giants." Might he not have added : " When I read Homer, I myself feel like a giant " ? There is, indeed, an enormous interval between the most ignorant and most learned man ; but time and opportunity may cancel it.

If human nature be one in its origin, it is likely to be one in its destiny. Beginning in unity, why should it not continue so for ever ? It seems to have been planned to remain eternally inseparable. Its parts interpenetrate each other to such an extent, are so interwoven, interlocked,

and even welded, that to dispart it is to ruin it. If a ship-builder, while building his vessel, were to contemplate the loss of a large portion of it during its voyage, he would naturally construct it in such a way that the part to be submerged and lost might go down without taking the rest with it; and hence, having bound every part as securely as possible to every other part, making the whole a solid, compact unit of timber and iron and cordage, we unavoidably conclude he designed it to remain so, whatever storms it might encounter or whatever wrenchings it might receive, — that it should go into its destined port intact. Thus, if it clearly appear that God made the human race a solidarity, formed such a close fellowship of souls, of families, and nations, that dismembering it is destroying it, how can we doubt that he intended one destiny for it? We have all embarked on the same ship, and if one end of our ship sinks in endless perdition the other end must follow, since the Almighty has prepared against any break in the middle. The larger portion of the passengers may perhaps occupy the steerage, and be reckoned as second class; nevertheless, the wave that sweeps them out to their death must wreck the cabin also, even the officers' rooms.

The laws of our individual being, and of society, compel us to seek the happiness of our fellow-men in order to secure our own. Parents cannot, if they would, sepa-

rate their own and their children's interests ; nor can brothers and sisters be indifferent to each other's welfare without inflicting harm on themselves. This heavenly ordained co-partnership of the family holds, although in a less palpable form perhaps, in the world at large. No nation can rise without lifting, more or less, other nations with it ; none can fall without pulling others down with it.

While we are writing, the French people are opening in Paris, with all possible *éclat*, the seventh World's Fair ; and this is being done in apparent indifference to the fact that neighboring nations, some of them, are engaged in preparations of a bloody sort : but it requires only a moment's reflection to discover that the splendid scenes transpiring on the *Place* of the Champ de Mars must lack their full measure of glory from the want of that sympathy and co-operation they would have received, but for the distractions caused by the threatening attitudes of England and Russia toward each other. The awful shadow of war spreading across Europe throws into partial eclipse that royal pageant of industry and art ; and its lesson, sad though it be in the main, will have at least one encouraging feature, if it shall teach the multitudes assembled at the Exposition to remember henceforth that Europe, as well as every other family of nations, must rise or fall together ; that war curses, and peace blesses, the whole land, be it never so wide.

The agitating questions of national diplomacy continually rising between governments, the important and difficult tasks laid upon consuls and ministers plenipotentiary, show that these governments are united by indissoluble ties, and that *E Pluribus Unum* might rationally be adopted as a universal motto.

The American people might have thought, at first, that it had been offered a rare opportunity to indulge in national selfishness, since it had found and settled upon a comparatively isolated continent, with the prospect of continuing undisturbed by other and less favored populations ; but no sooner was its success apparent, than there were sent to it multitudes from every kingdom, monarchy, and empire of the Old World, bringing with them so much poverty, and such adverse politics and religions, that they threatened to overburden and destroy the new attempt to establish a republican government. But it has done no good to complain. We cannot shake off foreigners if we try ; and we ought not to wish to do it. God has ordered that our chance shall be the chance of all who please to come ; that our spare acres shall make homes for them ; that our institutions shall educate, foster, and protect them ; that we shall be one. So it has happened that the nation which calls itself most independent is least so ; that its ballot-box is besieged by the ignorance and superstition of every country on

earth ; that its quiet Puritan Sabbath is broken in upon by noisy crowds and brass-bands. Let it be so. God is teaching us how to practise our doctrine of a common brotherhood. He is showing us that we cannot enter the paradise of freedom without taking the world along with us.

This universal solidarity providentially forced upon mankind in the present world, must continue in the world to come. If families, neighborhoods, nations, walk arm in arm here, and cannot, even when they would, break away entirely from one another, what shall separate them there, where union and affection is of infinitely more account? If it be said it is inconceivable how the righteous can be happy in the future life, except they be permitted to withdraw by themselves, to separate themselves from any association or sympathy or interest with the opposite class, we reply that it is more inconceivable how they can desire heaven on such conditions, since it is the very essence of righteousness, as well as of pure human nature, to labor and suffer for the unrighteous. We never knew a person who, in the exercise of his highest manhood, asked or expected or desired to be relieved from the sight and thought of his suffering fellow-men. Howard voluntarily spent his time in visiting and helping the wretched inmates of prisons ; and if there had been any Lethe in which he could have dropped his weary body and for-

gotten the misery he sought to alleviate, he would have scorned the offer of its waters. And can we imagine this noble philanthropist so changed as to be content in a heaven which maintains its existence by selfishly ignoring the woes of the lost? "Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them." "The exclusive in fashionable life," says Emerson, "does not see that he excludes himself from enjoyment in the attempt to appropriate it. The exclusionist in religion does not see that he shuts the door of heaven on himself in striving to shut out others." There is but one privilege greater than rejoicing with those who rejoice, — which is to weep with those who weep. To suffer with the suffering, to aid them, to hope for their prosperity, constitute a large part of our own blessedness; hence by the law of our own being, and by the law of the Gospel, a perfect heaven here or hereafter is impossible, except it include all mankind. There will, we trust, be less need and less material for a Chinese wall of selfishness in the next life than in this.

" Is heaven so high
That pity cannot breathe its air?
Its happy eyes for ever dry,
Its holy lips without a prayer!
My God! My God! if thither led
By thy free grace unmerited,
No crown nor palm be mine, but let me keep
A heart that still can feel, and eyes that still can weep."

Human nature is not absolute but relative ; therefore its potentialities, whatever they may be, do not lie wholly in itself. We cannot judge of its capabilities in any elaborate sense except in connection with its surroundings ; and with the Divine nature in which it was born, and by which it is sustained, taught, and controlled. Man naturally loves, hence must have objects on which to bestow his love ; and these objects, according to their nature and power, must benefit or injure, enlarge or dwarf him. He has a conscience ; he has religious faculties, —and these suggest a Supreme Being to whom he is accountable, and whose child he is. What he is, therefore, especially what he is to be, cannot be fully ascertained by studying his own inherent powers, since these are and must always continue to be subject to circumstances, to limitations imposed on them by their Creator. The statue of Moses in the San Pietro in Vinculi, at Rome, reveals both the excellent quality of the rock from which it was carved and the consummate skill of the sculptor ; without the other, neither could have been. A flaw in the marble would have foiled the purpose of the artist, while the most perfect block could never have been transformed into such a grand symmetrical figure by a less skilful chisel than Angelo's. Human nature is a quarry ; God is the infinite artist through whose hands the rough blocks are to pass : the question, then, as to the

capabilities of man, as to his future, is held in abeyance to the design of God in reference to them.

Our illustration, however, should not be understood as implying that man is as passive in the hands of God as the marble before the sculptor. Man is endowed with wonderful faculties ; with power to will, to think, and to act. He is impelled onward and upward by internal forces, by his own thoughts, feelings, and desires ; but these, to be effective, must be met, stimulated, enlightened, and guided by divine influences. Paul set forth both sides of this truth when he wrote : "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling ; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." We are not machines ; we are not inanimate stones ; and yet we should be little better, did not God work in us and with us.

Time also stands in responsible relation to the capabilities of human nature. The geologist asks for time to account for, and to explain, the history of the earth. We require this same factor to solve the problem of man's power and destiny. His nature is at first "without form, and void," as the world was ; and not until the "spirit of God" has moved over its deep possibilities, does it emerge into visible being, and take its proper form and beauty. Its days, like the days of the Creation, need to be stretched into indefinite periods. Measureless ages

intervene between the beginning and the perfecting. The first human pair, whoever, wherever, or whenever they were, had in them the germs of all the race has since become ; but it required uncounted generations for these seeds to grow and yield the rich harvests of our present civilization. Hence the argument, had there been any, held over those incipient souls regarding their latent powers, would have had but insignificant ground to stand on, without taking into account the interminable future ; and without following in imagination the stream of moral and mental activities starting in these nascent faculties, in their ever widening, ever deepening, channel down to the remotest ages. And if the forces which produced a Bacon or a Washington began in the least of the infusoria, or in a still earlier infinitesimal particle of protoplasm or bioplasm, as some scientists affirm, the necessity of an Infinite intelligence to superintend the process leading to such far off and mighty results is immensely enhanced ; while we have a still more striking illustration of the part Time plays in the drama of human progress.

We are permitted to have a tolerably adequate comprehension of what man has already accomplished. The fruits of his past existence are before us ; we may count up the successes of separate minds, and of the combined race ; and if these fruits as a whole are not satisfactory,

it is only because our ideal of what man is capable, and should have done, is very exalted. Every one will at least confess to considerable pride at the magnitude of certain individual attainments. No one thinks of Moses, Plato, Paul, Galileo, Columbus, Lincoln, without pleasurable wonder that they could have achieved so much; and could we hope that all men will finally ascend to such heights of knowledge and usefulness, our joy and gratification would be complete. And why should we lack this assurance, while all the factors necessary to produce it are present, — namely, God, Human Nature, and Time? God supplies the awakening power, the light, the opportunity; Human Nature the unlimited material to work upon and with; Time the necessary space in which to effect these results. Hence there is ground for believing that the whole race will finally be brought up to the highest mark yet reached by the greatest mind. There is more probability now that all men will become Bacons intellectually, and St. Johns morally and spiritually, than there was once that one man would ever become a Bacon or a St. John. What could have taxed human credulity more severely than the promise of the printing-press, the steam-engine, the telegraph, and last, and most wonderful of all, the phonograph? Are we to halt in our hope of human nature after what we have seen? Are not man's capabilities absolutely unlimited? "The

height of the pinnacle is determined by the breadth of the base." The knowledge we have that Jesus has already saved millions, makes the belief easier to us (or ought to) than it was to the disciples that he will "draw all men" unto him.

Man shows in his constitution that he was formed for truth; and truth, in its fitness to man, shows that it was formed for him. Together they are every thing; apart they are nothing. To bring them together is the mission of all the teachers God sends into the world. "Plato," says Hamilton, "defines man 'a hunter after truth.'" He hunts after it because he hungers for it, as the body hungers for food. He "scents it" through faculties given him for that purpose; and through the same and other faculties he experiences pleasure in pursuing it; and after finding it and enjoying it, he doubles his delight by communicating it to others. In this way, God enhances the certainty of the universal diffusion of truth; that is, by blessing both teacher and pupil, searcher and bringer, hearer and preacher.

"Does not the eye in the human embryo predict the light?" So, do our faculties as they exist here predict immortality. This world does not, cannot, satisfy us. Goethe's last words were, "More light!" A distinguished American statesman, far advanced in years, died while reading (and understandingly) one of Bacon's essays, the

ponderous volume he was holding, falling on his breast as a solemn sign that life had fled. Now did this mind thirsting for knowledge till the last, delighted till the last in the masterly exercise of thought, pass out of existence with the breath of the body? Michael Angelo grew in intellectual strength as he grew in years; he began and finished the mightiest work of his life after he was eighty; and when, finally, as he was nearing his ninetieth birthday, the call came for him to depart, he had his chisel in his hand still, and was planning for other achievements like those which had already filled the world with his fame. He had outlived all his companions in art; he had built for himself a greater monument than any papal mausoleum; had risen until he stood where he had no peer in the admiration and affection of his countrymen; and yet he was as unsatisfied as ever, as anxious to learn and to do as ever. Were not such powers, retaining their ambition and vigor up to the moment of death, prophetic of larger opportunities and higher rewards beyond?

“Create in me a clean heart, O God! and renew a right spirit within me. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.” Is not this prayer of the Psalmist the prayer of human nature? Does not human nature love moral cleanness?

We anticipate unfavorable answers from many quarters

to these questions. There is so much uncleanness in the world, and so many persons seem content to live in it ; inherited and acquired depravity abounds so universally ; resistance to holiness is so frequent and so decided, — that the impression is naturally prevalent that sin is man's normal condition ; that he accepts it willingly, breathes it as his native air, revels in it with delight. Plausible as this theory is ; fortified as it is by profound learning and earnest piety, — we suggest that a mistake has been made in regarding the immoral and vicious habits men have fallen into as parts of human nature. But how have they fallen into these habits, if not from an internal tendency to sin ? They succumbed at first through weakness, but not through total depravity. There were always moral instincts which rebelled against the fall, but they were overcome. " Now," says Paul, " if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Sin dwells in human nature, and controls it often ; vitiates its energies, even its will and its motives : but it is no part of its organism. Hamilton quotes Bacon as saying, " Man's nature runs either to herbs or weeds." This seems to be true ; but the herbs are indigenous, the weeds exotic. God sows the " good seed " in the laws and functions of the soul ; " an enemy " comes afterwards, and sows " tares."

There was never a human body so depraved in its

habits as not to delight in the bath ; faces and hands can hardly be found so soiled as not to say, "Wash me !" So there is always a moral feeling in the natural soul which prays, "Cleanse me from my sins !" And this proves that sin is not constitutional ; that we were formed with reference to a life of purity ; that the original powers of our nature look toward holiness. There is in us what Matthew Arnold has called "instinctive perfection," and which, he adds, "is the master power in humanity." This power however, to be complete master, needs the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Human nature is incapable of saving itself ; hence a Saviour has been provided for it. "We shall all agree," says President Porter, "in this : that man is a moral being, and as such possesses all the endowments which are requisite for responsible activity. He is personal and free. He assents to the excellence of duty upon himself, and he imposes duty on himself as the supreme law of his inner and outward activity." We have, then, only to premise that human nature will remain the same in the future world ; that it will continue eternally "personal and free ;" that the mission of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, will also extend into the future world, — to believe in the ultimate salvation of mankind.

SIN AND ITS SEQUENCES.

BY G. H. EMERSON, D.D.

IN the discussion of topics essentially ethical, the difficult task is not so much in elucidation as in definition. Perhaps we should come nearer to a precise statement, were we to say that the substantial part of the elucidation is in a process of definition. A clear and firm apprehension of the peculiarities of the topic,—one that is in no danger of confounding those peculiarities with other matters,—is often all that discussion need aim at. The reader who has been put in possession of the real topic, and who has been qualified to hold it without insensibly changing any part of it for other things which though resembling phases of the topic are yet not identical with them, may in most cases be trusted to work his own way towards the conclusions which are logically involved. Definition therefore is, we are strongly persuaded, the chief business of this chapter.

That evil thing whereof we are now to trace the sequences, many readers will presume must at this date be

beyond the possibility of misapprehension. That thing is personal with everybody. We all feel it and suffer from it. Can there be a doubt as to its essential nature? In regard to that nature, can there be a real difference of opinion — we may rather say of experience? Surely, that against which law-giver, prophet, evangelist, and preacher have for centuries declaimed; that which Christ came to destroy, and in the destruction of which souls are saved and glorified; that which has been the theme of constant explanation since the disobedience in Eden, — surely, that cannot need a definition now: so it may be thought. We are not to presume that the Gospel is revealed against an ambiguity.

Assuredly, particular cases of sinfulness seldom need much definition. With Paul and Felix, with Marcus Aurelius and Nero, with Borgia and Fénelon before us, we can never have a doubt as to which are good and which are evil. Personal examples of sin to be understood need but to be seen. But when we are compelled to consider the sin apart from the sinful person, the difficulty in apprehension becomes most real, and the danger of mistake constant. That which in the concrete is plain to the way-faring and the simple, in the abstract tests the acuteness of thinking and the accuracy of definition. Wicked Felix confuses nobody. The wickedness of Felix — or that which is its essential equivalent — has

been the subject of analysis and explication for centuries ; and the octavos devoted to the definition would make a library.

Does it occur to any reader to complain that we are prolonging an introduction ? We earnestly submit that the introduction is but in form ; in truth, we are at the heart of our subject. And no insignificant part of the task we have in hand is already accomplished, provided we are successful in firmly impressing the point that sin considered as an entity — as something apart from the person who sins — *is* an abstraction. The very word sin is a figure ; it does not literally but only metaphorically recognize a reality. This reality is not a thing properly called sin, but rather a person in the act of sinning. The poverty of language, its very limited capability for making literal statements, which necessitates the figurative method of abstracting the sin from the sinner, and the treating of it as if it were an entity (which in fact it cannot be), is radically misleading where it accustoms the mind to regard it as a something in itself. The “sin of the world” does not mean a mass of wicked stuff, analogous to the mountains of ice which surround the poles. The thing always meant is that of a responsible person choosing and acting badly, when the ability and the opportunity for choosing and acting virtuously are given. And we repeat and would emphasize the position, that the reader who has become guarded against

the misapprehension we have described, so far from standing on the portals of our theme, has made no inconsiderable advance within its gates. We should add that the method of treating our subject, which compels us to abstract the sin from the sinner and present it as if it had a separate existence, is nothing peculiar to ethical disquisition. It is the method of the physicist, who in discoursing upon color abstracts the red or the blue from the thing that is red or blue ; who if sound is his topic does in the very statement of the subject present the abstraction and not the thing.

The metaphysical substratum on which a definition of sin rests, — which raises questions as to the seat of the evil, whether in desire, in volition, in motive, or in combinations of these ; and questions which bring somewhat discordant answers, — need not here be considered. Fortunately, it answers our present purpose to begin at a stage much nearer easy apprehension, and where the wiser authorities are in substantial agreement. Whatever diversities of belief there may be back of or prior to the following position, we are confident that the position itself will provoke no dissent : *Sin appears when a person, having the ability and the opportunity to choose and act upon the known good, freely chooses and acts upon the known evil.* To every person of moral and religious accountability, the known good, the entirety of righteousness, includes as its

root and substance that which has been proclaimed with authority, — the love of God and the love of man ; and to every such person the known evil includes for root and substance the converse, which is hate ; and it has the authoritative elucidation, “ He that hateth his brother is a murderer.”

In modern and philosophic phraseology, the vitality of sin is in the attitude of disobedience towards God, — the heart's refusal to yield to his known will. We say that the vitality, the qualitative spirit, of sin is in this attitude of the heart. Locate this disobedience where you may, — in desire, volition, proclivity, motive, intent, — the disobedience is the “ original ” sin. It is therefore true that he who really loves his Maker and his fellow creatures is morally good, even though because of lack of ability or of opportunity, he fails to express that love in any overt act or form. And so he that hates is sinful, even though because of circumstance or inability his hate never gets beyond the simple feeling, never manifests itself in a corresponding audible or tangible act. But it rarely happens that a person is wholly bereft of opportunity to act as he feels ; and therefore it rarely happens that the will can be taken for the deed. When possible, the good deed must follow, or there is no good intent ; and the evil deed will follow, or there is no evil intent.

If in the generality of cases there were nothing in-

volved save the feeling, — that of love or that of its converse, — it would take but a paragraph to dispose of the question of sequence. But here comes the momentous consideration which at once complicates, extends, and enriches our theme: *Every moral person has many and diversified relations alike to God and his fellows.* It is along the lines of these relationships that duties and responsibilities run. In every way, in every regard, in which the love of God and man has opportunity, at least occasion, to put itself into overt act, the duty to do so is imperative; and the wilful refusal so to act, the wilful doing of the things which are contrary thereto, is sin. Christianity is not neglectful to connect the heart's feeling with the possible corresponding act. It is not enough that we profess love for the hungry and naked brother; we must also manifest that love in a discreet, yet real, ministering to his needs. To say: Be ye warmed and be ye filled, notwithstanding that we give not the things which are needful thereto, profits nothing. The apostle in this gives both the metaphysics and the physics of the substance of sin. The love in the heart, the impulsion in the motive, the intent in the will (by whatever form of words we choose to express the one and same thing), includes the possible and perceived outward act: it includes this as essentially, organically, imperatively related, blending in the unit of righteousness both the attitude of the heart and the responsive action of the hand.

The details of the moral relationships of man to his fellows and to his Maker—grand and almost numberless in the specialties of duty and of prudential regulation—belong to and make the subject-matter of Moral Science. We are not called upon here to give in any degree the enumeration or the explication. But we can in no particular advance our subject unless we emphasize and render constantly distinct the position that such specialties and regulations are real. The lungs are not more rigidly and vitally related to the atmosphere which they inhale, than is the soul of man—in its sympathies, affections, and obligations—related to the weal of other members of the race, and also to the ordinances of God. The body of humanity, whereof each person is but a lively member, is but a recognition in metaphor of the essential unity of all of human kind. Obedience is an act bearing not more upon self than upon others; and often upon self mainly as it affects the weal of others. The moral nature, whence emanates love going forth into tangible expression, gives the bond of society,—literally makes society: it furnishes that which makes society peculiar, as distinct from and superior to the gregarious companionship of the lower animals. Hence, social obligations are as real as self-obligations. And we directly touch the specialty of our topic, up to which we have now worked our way, when we add: As it is in the neglect or infringement, both in feeling and

in deed, of the duties which inhere in our self, social, and divine relationships that sin has its genesis and quality; so it is in the operations of those neglects and infringements, along the varying and ramifying lines of the several relationships, *that sin finds its sequences.*

Still it is definition, yet we trust pertinent matter, and we ask, What are we to understand by sequences? Unquestionably sequences are effects; but they do not include every effect. We pursue our theme by attaching to the term sequence that particular kind of effect which is invariable, organic, constitutional, having its operation in the nature of the case. Effects that are contingent on accident, incident, or fortuitous circumstance, — which may happen once and never be repeated; which have their potentiality less in their cause than in the peculiarities of condition, — are not sequents. This radical difference we must endeavor to make clear.

The story goes that a blacksmith was a moment behind the time of his promise in shoeing a horse. It thence followed that a messenger riding upon that horse was a moment late in delivering a military order. It next followed that the general in command fought under unfavorable conditions a battle which his superior had countermanded. Next in the order of results the army was destroyed. The issue of this calamity was the destruction of the nation. The last effect named in the story was a

change in the course of subsequent history. The blacksmith's failure was the initial cause. In succession came the six effects, — the messenger's delay, the fighting of the battle, the defeat, the nation's ruin, the course of history changed. These six results were indeed effects; *but they were not sequences.*

Another story has familiar constituents. A man cast a kernel of corn into good soil, where it took root and sprang up, first, the blade; second, the ear; third, the full corn in the ear. The germinating seed is the initial act and cause. In successive order came the three effects, — the blade, the ear, the full corn. These were effects: *they were also sequences.*

The characteristic of a fixed organic connection between each stage of the development and that immediately preceding, as also that immediately succeeding, very sharply separates the kind of effects given in the second story from the kind given in the first. Between a blacksmith's failure to make good his promise and the delivery of a military order, there is no organic connection. If to-morrow a thousand blacksmiths should do the same thing, it is not likely that in any case the delay of a message to the general of an army would be a result; and it is morally certain that no loss of an army or fall of empire would be a further issue. All the issues given in the story were contingent upon conditions purely arbitrary, and such as may

never be repeated. But of the effects named in the second example, we may literally apply the apostolic pledge : "Whatsoever a man soweth, that *shall* he also reap." The good seed once rooted in congenial soil, the successive stages have such certainty and such uniformity, that any failure is at once attributed to a disturbance of the natural conditions.

We have therefore the difference between the kind of results which are mechanical and accidental, and the kind which are organic and inevitable. The sequential effect or result is never a thing of chance nor of arbitrary arrangement : it is constitutional, absolutely inhering in its cause and the established conditions.

The importance of the topic — the Sequences of Sin — is in the consideration that these sequences are retributive. And if this be true, no rhetoric can overstate the claims which our subject has upon the serious and the anxious thought of mankind. That retribution is in the natural and inevitable effects of wicked intent and act is insisted on by all intelligent moralists, and is disputed by but very few theologians : and even when disputed, it is usually a dispute as to terms. Those who believe and teach that God's government is analogous to human government, and that his punishments for evil doing are statutory and come by fiat from without, — the same as do the penalties provided for by human enactments, — seem to be anxious to guard

that supposed form of retribution from that which, as we have explained, is sequential. While therefore they admit the fact of the sequences, and even make an appeal to them as warning, and as sustaining the Divine requirements, they refuse to attach to them the generic name of punishment. But the current discussions of the general topic of retribution in nearly every case, whether or not they presume the existence and the danger of statutory penalty, do not hesitate to give great prominence to the retributive character of those palpable results of sin which are sequential. We therefore assume the proposition, and we specially mark the vast and solemn importance of its truth : *Retribution is in the sequences of sin.*

But do the sequences include *all* the retributions whereby God marks and proclaims his aversion to sin? Certainly, all instances of punishment by miracle are excluded from the category of sequences. If the deaths which befel Ananias and Sapphira were specially ordered in view of their falsehoods to the Lord, those deaths were not sequential. If however, when they saw that they had lied not unto men but unto the Lord, they were so startled at the terrible nature of their guilt that death was the natural issue of the shock, — a supposition by no means improbable, and not negatived by any statement in the records, — those deaths were sequential. But we are not particular in regard to the merits of the case of these per-

sons, or of any of the examples given in the Scriptures, for we admit the reality of miracle as pervading the Biblical history: were this the proper connection, we should here dispute the position and the reasoning of those who deny that constituent. But by universal consent we may refuse to anticipate miracle where none is promised; where none is threatened. We therefore take the position, Save in all cases of punishment by miraculous agency, the sequences of sin include the entirety of its retribution.

In avowing this position however, we must explain, and warn the reader to consider, that we take no narrow or restricted view of the real sequences of guilty doing. The relationships of man, as we explained in the outset, are vast, varied, and far-reaching; and the sequential channels are as numerous and extended. If it seems a perversion of terms to speak of man as related to himself, it surely is a literal fact that his feelings and conduct are related to himself; powerfully reacting upon him, for evil or for blessing, in his intellect, moral nature, and even animal powers. The relationships, therefore, have at least three grand channels, in that they attach to self, to society, and to God. With the moralist, therefore, we say that the sinner gets retribution in the direct and organic connection which his guilty conduct has with himself and with his fellows; and with the religionist or theologian we

add, — and also with Him to whom he must give account. Any notion of sequences which limits them to remorse, or to lower forms of unhappiness, though it recognizes a very weighty particular, excludes far more than it includes. Our purpose is to exclude all gratuitous miracles, and to find God's government in the laws he has impressed on the objects of his rule, — his retributions in the varied, vast, and fearful evolutions of the intent and act of guilt. May we here express our satisfaction in finding our position in this important regard confirmed by thoughtful men in current discussions on the question of sin and its award? The recent, and in some particulars vehement transference of the explications of sin and penalty from the theological to an ethical basis, — predicating of the operations of sin *in* the sinner, rather than of inflictions by God *upon* the sinner, — is a real, even if not formal, recognition of the proposition, The sequences of sin include the entirety of retribution, cases of special or exceptional intervention alone excepted.

But what are some of the sequences of sin? Of course it is not expected that we shall even approach a full enumeration. We can describe but a few, and note the general characteristics.

1. Remorse, that most common and most painful experience of guilty man, will promptly occur to every one who makes any attempt to specify the retributive

sequences of sin. Just in proportion to the sensitiveness of the conscience, and to the success with which moral training has impressed it, will the act of wrong be followed by an inward censure, at times too painful for endurance. This evidently was the "trouble and sorrow" which made the hell of David. This is the troubled sea of guilt whose waters "cast up mire and dirt." This is the worm that in better natures will not die. This is the torment which the first murderer found greater than he could bear. This is the secret of "conscience money," of public confessions, sometimes of despair.

Remorse is too obvious a sequence to call for much beyond a simple recognition. Yet it has three characteristics which must be at least stated.

(a) Its intensity reveals a moral nature which is not strong enough to resist a temptation, but is nevertheless vigorous and recuperative. It is a dead limb that does not start at the touch of the surgeon's probe. The wound that is followed by acute pain is the more likely to heal. Where there is torture there is vitality; and where there is vitality easy recovery is probable. Remorse, therefore, is a hopeful symptom; for though a testimony to a guilty life, it is a revelation of moral capability.

(b) Though it seems to us indiscriminate, and in individual cases not always palpably in accordance with the facts, to say unqualifiedly that retribution is reform-

atory, it may, we are confident, be firmly said that remorse, as a particular phase of retribution, is clearly meant for recovery, and powerfully operates to that end. We do indeed hold — basing the conviction on observed facts and the course of human history, and also finding support for it in theological premises — that retribution *as a whole* is reformatory to the race *as a whole*. Yet we must confess that, in reference to the entirety of retribution, the individual sinner must often lose the direct benefit for the good of others. The degradation of the drunkard as a terrible warning is salutary to the tempted world, though we fail to see wherein it always operates to the good of the victim. It is a humane sequence, for the many thereby are taught, warned, and strengthened; but to the sufferer it is, at least apparently, weakness and loss. But that special sequence which is accompanied by remorse is unmistakably a power for recovery. Let it be strong enough and enduring enough, and it will at last bring the sinner to the humiliation that is followed by penitence and amendment. While all retributive sequences vindicate God's mercy to the world, remorse vindicates that mercy to the individual sufferer. *It* at least is directly and constantly for the sinner's good.

(c) Further, and to the religionist a momentous truth, — remorse recognizes a responsibility that cannot attach to man: it is the proclamation of the will of a Higher Being,

and it seems the literalness of truth to say that it is the expression of God's censure. When you wrong another, and your conscience is tortured at the memory of that wrong, the conscience tells you that it is not the party injured who has made that act a wrong. Its moral quality is instinctively attributed to a greater than man ; and though an *injury* as respects the man, it is felt to be a *sin* against God. This particular sequence is, therefore, seen to spread along the various lines of relationship which link an evil act to the doer, to another, and to the Supreme.

2. To the limited and possibly delusive apprehension of mortals, it would seem well if the pain of remorse were a constant and ever increasing sequence of sin. In that event, there would seem little serious risk in leaving man to himself. If the avenging worm were literally undying, if the fire of torturing reproof were literally unquenchable, the soul would ever carry with it the needful, and in the end effective, check ; and, in every regard in which penalty can operate towards results essentially moral, also the incentive to penitence and amendment. Literally, in the matter of his redemption, or at least the antecedents thereto, man would be sufficient unto himself, and the Gospel as a saving power approaching from without might not be needed. As the pain of the burn keeps every sane person from wantonly putting his hand or holding his hand in fire, so would the sting and cry of remorse, so would

a fixed and increasing pain, keep him from the intents and acts of guilty conduct.

It is however a part of the mystery of sin, a part of the at present inexplicable problem why sin is permitted at all, that its most potent and reliable counteractive often grows less in about the proportion in which the guilt grows great. There are many exceptions to what yet would seem to be the rule, that continuance in evil doing gradually reduces the positive pain that follows. Here then, as in the fact of sin itself, we are thrown back upon faith trusting where we cannot trace. Or shall we say that the mystery of sin itself includes the weakening of its counteractives? If the check were effective, sin could not be, at least could not continue; and so the very problem would disappear. But whatever our philosophy of the fact, the fact itself is real: with frequent and at times startling exceptions to the rule, the rule evidently is that the restraint or counteractive of remorse grows less and less as sin is repeated and extended.

We thus come upon the most serious and the most alarming of all the sequences of sin, — a phase of retribution no doubt just and merciful, in that it is salutary and corrective to others than the one who suffers it; but to him very generally a hindrance rather than a corrective, — to him yet more enslaving rather than redemptive. We hardly need Scripture authority for a fact so widely and so terribly

attested ; but we can reason upon the theme in no other terms so pertinent as those of the Bible. One word of frequent occurrence in the Book precisely recognizes it, — the *hardening* of the heart : the oft-recurring warning is, “Harden not your hearts.” The first acts of sin may render more acute, more sensitive, the conscience ; but the reign of sin, its dominance and repetition, is unto death. “The wages of sin is death.” Of those who had become saints in Ephesus, the record is that once they “were dead in trespasses and sins.” The philosophic phraseology for this ulterior sequence of sin is moral insensibility, spiritual torpor, the inability to feel remorse. But we cannot improve upon the Scripture phrase, — the hardness of the heart. The oft-cited example of the murderer who testified that his first crime reacted upon his conscience in a horror of remorse, great to the verge of despair, but whose hundredth victim occasioned within him no compunctions, — is doubtless an exaggerated statement of an individual example ; yet it recognizes what we have described as a general (not uniform) ulterior sequence of sin.

3. The limits of this chapter forbid more than the baldest statement of what cannot be amplified in less than the compass of a book, — the ramifications and far-reaching sequences of sin, affecting the relations of the evil-doer to society. In the general lowering of the moral tone self-respect sinks, bringing with it the loss of public respect,

and often working destruction even in secular avocations. A sound conscience is essential to success in business ; such is the rule, whatever may be said of exceptions. Even the physical health, the ability to perform the humblest of manual labor, the very getting of bread and raiment, — all the bodily and the secular activities are impaired ; often thwarted by that which at its root is an “attitude of the conscience.” There is a unity in the whole life and all the relationships of an individual, whereby the moral virus starting from the will (or wherever we may locate the genesis of sin) poisons the whole stream, the thousand streams of life, reaching into and permeating every thread of being, personal and social, spiritual and material. The Roman citizen had the option of selling himself into slavery ; but having elected to do this, he forfeited the power whereby his liberty might be regained. Even so he that sins and persists therein often becomes “the servant of sin,” held in bondage thereto by the loss of self-respect, by the tyranny of evil inclination, by the giving way of the moral restraints which society would impose, and by the varied ramifications in which the habits of a debased nature become entangled, and whereby the sinner, in the New Testament use of a much perverted word, is “lost.”

Our topic is not salvation from sin, but the sequences thereof. It does not fall to this chapter, therefore, to consider the question of escape from the meshes of evil which

we have sought to elucidate. We may however give the relief which inheres in a Gospel which is not of Despair, but of Hope. Happily, there is another subject than the one now under consideration. If indeed our topic was the entirety of the moral problem ; if there were no " theological " phase to supplement the " ethical ; " if destiny were solely a question of man, and in no regard a matter enlisting the action of God, — we should say that the future had very little to inspire courage and justify hope. But as surely as there is a reign unto death, there is another reign which is unto life. If moral death is sin's wages, eternal life is God's gift. And the saints at Ephesus were persons who had been " dead in trespasses and sins, " but who under the quickening of the Spirit had " passed from death unto life. " Given a God who becomes strength to the weak, a Saviour who seeks the lost, and the darkest cloud of guilt has the silver lining of Divine promise. There is a blood that can cleanse from all sin.

Our most hopeful view of the destiny of all souls, resting we trust on its own and sufficient foundations, imposes upon us no necessity of making the sequences of sin less real, less extended, less tenacious than the facts disclose. Our impression is strong that the evolution of sin, *were it not interfered with* (in other words, were there no Gospel or its equivalent), would issue in the extinction of moral being, its death being literal not less than figurative ; its

resurrection a result not to be hoped for. Trusting another and quite distinct Power to deal with the evil, we can see no reason in creed or prejudice tempting us to explain away or under-estimate the magnitude of the evil itself.

It seems to us, however, a fact embraced in the sequences of sin that of itself *it has no essential permanence*. It is clearly the soul's distemper; and disease, as every just analogy teaches, must end either in cure or in dissolution: in any view *it must end*. Now it is not a speculation, but a palpable fact,—affirmed by nearly every creed, and illustrated by innumerable examples,—that the tenacity of sin is not absolutely unyielding. The notion of essential permanence, as affirmed of any phase of character, is not only false to psychology, not only a contradiction of the indestructible freedom of every moral nature, but is also negatived by numerous and startling examples constantly occurring. In truth, sin in becoming essentially permanent ceases to be sin.

Our imperfect elucidation would indeed fail, and at a vital point, did we not include certainly as possible, and generally as probable, though not an unyielding yet *a real tenacity* in sin and its sequences. Many of the antecedents of redemption are unquestionably sudden, possibly instantaneous. There are quick convictions: not infrequently it is, in the literal use of words, that one "is struck with conviction." There are also sudden revolutions of

feeling ; and unlawful objects long desired are abruptly and permanently discarded. Inebriates have filled their cups, and before the poison was brought to their lips they have dashed it to the ground, never again to yield to the temptation. Repentance is in its nature a sudden resolve put into the act on the instant. New knowledge, sudden revelations, at times strike the soul to the very core ; and the newness of feeling and of purpose comes in the "twinkling of an eye." These are not surmises, they are facts. But the mistake is fundamental that confounds these experiences with that to which they often lead,—an amended and sanctified character. For this, the ulterior issue, we know of no fact, of no analogy, that sanctions the notion of suddenness. or even of great rapidity. The characteristic marks cannot be erased : they must be outgrown. In a comprehensive word, the salvation is a growth and not a creation. To this conclusion is the purport of the sequences of sin.

We have the consent of nearly all, that the causes counteractive of sin and its issues must be moral : it is a contradiction of the thought, not less than of the words, to attribute so radical a transformation to mechanical or physical agencies. We must hold that it is a duty of those who would instruct the people on this great theme, that, while they use words properly expressive of moral agencies, they should be thoughtful and painstaking to

make the *impression* accord with the verbal meaning. Any prejudice which is gratified by phraseology that will bear the construction of mechanical rather than rational causes, should be steadily and effectively rebuked. While certain conditions of the efficacy of moral forces may be physical, we wrong those who listen to us if we do not make them see and feel the world-wide difference between spiritual causes and adventitious material conditions. Not only should we iterate and reiterate that "we are saved by grace" co-operating with the willing heart and mind, but we should strive to foreclose all possibility of the perverting these words into other than their moral or spiritual significance. So much is in the ethics of our theme.

Finally, considerations of time and place can have but an incidental bearing upon the operation of spiritual and redemptive causes. If the formula be true, "*We are* spirits but *have* bodies," the question whether we are in bodies or out of bodies, though it may be one of certain temptations, can never be one of holy character. For this the mind, heart, and will must strive, the Divine Spirit always "aiding and abetting;" and at whatever date we begin, whether it be prior to death, at death, or subsequent to that physical change, the issue must be reached by the process of growth. We know of no analogy that suggests a different conclusion. The Sequences of Sin —

if in any degree we have successfully traced them — imperatively forbid an opposite conclusion.

Our subject is the darkest in the realm of ethical and theological considerations. We have literally attempted a diagnosis of the foulest and most tenacious of all maladies. We dismiss its treatment with the reiteration that the soul's malady, however deep-seated, however rooted in its various sequences, and however in manifold cases tenacious in the presence of redeeming influences, is nevertheless *curable*, — considered to be such by respectable thinkers of every creed, and proved to be such by innumerable examples. The question of cure, its process and its results, we yield to other hands.

JESUS AND THE GOSPEL.

BY J. SMITH DODGE, JR.

IT is the function of Jesus Christ to bring man into harmony with God. This is salvation. The announcement that this is to be done is the "Good Tidings," — the Gospel.

But we must be careful not to suppose this an afterthought of God, or in any way supplementary to his original design. No conception is worthy of the Infinite Creator, which does not perceive him to have begun and to be prosecuting his work upon a plan perfectly harmonious and infallible. "Of him, and through him, and to him are all things." This plan is nothing else than the production of beings in his own image and, when the process is complete, in perfect harmony with himself. But, since harmony among intelligent beings must be voluntary, such a plan cannot be kept secret; it must be made known to the objects of it. Even if there were other intelligences to observe this work, not themselves concerned in it, we can hardly conceive that the great Artist could fail to display his purpose to their eyes at every stage. To us it is

plainly shown. Not only does a survey from our present point of view show God's plan of reconciliation everywhere, but since the earliest ages men have learned from the suggestions of Nature, from the voice of conscience, and from reasoning, that some great Power exists above them whom it becomes them to reverence and obey. "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made." No one who carefully appreciates the development attained by man in personal worth and social order, without the gospel, will think lightly of that constant suggestion of God's great scheme which is woven into the work of his hands.

But all expression is limited by the material which embodies it ; and every revelation of God's purpose was necessarily imperfect until it was set forth in a human life. In no other way could the plan of reconciliation, the ideal of complete harmony with God, be expressed to men than by an example of that harmony reaching all the depths of a soul, and maintained inviolate amid all outward conditions. Such was the life of Jesus Christ ; and in that life for the first time came fully within man's sight the eternal, unvaried plan on which God built the worlds and created the souls of his children. There has been no repetition of the example ; and therefore it stands to-day as it stood at first, the only perfect revelation, the only

open door by which man may come to God and know him. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Therefore, there remains for us and for all men a perennial interest in Jesus Christ ; and instead of lapsing into the past, one of the honored throng who have done their part and given place to their successors, he stands in as intimate relation to one age as to another, the unique man whom none supplants and none can spare, — "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

But as we approach this Captain of our salvation, our personal hope and advantage are for a little eclipsed by the splendor of so great a presence. Who is this representative of that which all creation suggests, and all the ages have surmised and groped after? Obviously, the one man who has lived in perfect harmony with God, and who has enjoyed this, not as the late-won result of many mistakes and efforts, but through all his life as the unfolding of a perfect flower from a perfect bud, must have stood from the first in some relation of peculiar intimacy with God. He is called his Son, first-born, only-begotten, "the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person ;" and men have naturally speculated much, and strained the meaning of every inspired word, to form some adequate idea of Christ's relation to God. How fruitless the effort ! It is the vain endeavor to sound an ocean, along whose

shores the shallowest inlet is beyond our depth. What progress has been made toward understanding the beginning or the transmission even of physical life? What do we know of the mystery of parentage and the wonders of heredity? And when I cannot guess why one of my children has his mother's eyes, and another his grandfather's hair; when my mind refuses to grasp the paradox that my offspring, a new being, individual, authentic, is yet a bundle of inherited qualities, — how shall I dare to grope in the recesses of Divine being, and pretend to expound how the Son of God was begotten? When one has followed for a while the speculations which have darkened this theme, he may well turn away, with old Irenaeus' contempt, from those generation-mongers who prate, he says, of the begetting of the Son of God, *quasi ipsi obstetricarint*. When all is said, we know this, and can know no more: In whatever way derived being may stand so related to the Underived as most intimately to share his nature and bear his spirit, in that way, to us unknown, is Jesus Christ the Son of God.

It is of vastly greater importance for us to know that the harmony between the Saviour and his Father is perfect, without reservation or exception, so that in presenting to us the full realization of God's great plan he also represents God himself; and that, not vaguely and far off, but with so complete a fulness that we have no other

means of attaining any knowledge of God which approaches the grandeur or the clearness of the revelation in Jesus Christ. We know of God's character what we see in his Son ; and beyond this nothing. "I and my Father are one." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Now this perfect likeness excludes all idea of variance or opposition between Father and Son ; and therefore it excludes all those conceptions of Christ's work which imply such an opposition : that is to say, it excludes not only those which represent the Son as appeasing his Father's wrath, or as assuming a penalty for men which God will not remit ; but equally those more subtle modern presentations which display Christ as circumventing the metaphysical necessities of Divine government. Inasmuch as we cannot predicate of Christ any power which God has not, every such scheme when simply stated implies that Christ was more willing than God to remove certain difficulties. Putting aside, therefore, all such views, we rest simply in the assurance that the Son of God, both in the purpose and in all the processes of his work, is absolutely at one with the Father whom he represents.

But the complete harmony of God and man cannot be represented by the image of God alone, but necessarily by the image of God *in a man*. Now this is Christ. We do not need the assurance of authority to prove this ;

we *see* that the Son of God is also the Son of Man. Never did there live a person who drew to him such universal human sympathy. Never was pain mourned as his pains have been ; never a heart to which so many hearts felt themselves akin. It is true, in him we see humanity raised to its highest ; but it is *only* the more truly human for that. The representative of any species is not the average but the type. The heart of mankind cries out at the spectacle, "Thus man should be !" and the eternal purpose of God replies, "Thus man shall be !" Finding ourselves, then, in the presence of a man so supremely exalted that he is perfectly in harmony with God, and therefore perfectly represents him to us, we attain the first result of this culminating revelation, and perceive that our nature partakes of the divine. God is no longer a mighty stranger but an august Kinsman—our Father. We are not made to flutter a moment and fade away. We are born to live for ever, and the endless vista of eternity offers scope and opportunity enough for the purpose of God to reach its full achievement.

But no mere spectacle of qualities, however admirable, could make the perfect Christ, — as the most exact painting is not the face of Nature, or Pygmalion's statue is not yet his bride until it lives. It is of the essence of the Divine purpose that it is efficient, moving always towards the achievement of its aim ; and therefore he who repre-

sents it to us must also exert positive and persistent efficiency, working always to bring that to pass which he announces. This is eminently true of Christ. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." This is implied when he is called our Saviour, — a practical, efficient helper. And since he not only was the Saviour of the first century but is the Saviour of the nineteenth, he must be to-day a living power, mighty to save. This vastly broadens our view of Christ. Instead of a remote, historical revelation, he becomes one of the constant powers of the world, an indispensable factor in the problem of man's destiny. So long as we look upon the few years of Christ's earthly life as the full period of his work, we must blunder into constant misunderstanding; but our conception alike of his person and his power rises to worthy proportions, when we believe that those years were but a specimen of that which our Saviour has been doing ever since, and will continue to do until God shall be all in all. It seems impossible to doubt, after studying the New Testament, that it teaches as a cardinal truth the persistent presence of Christ among men. Alluding to his own death as the means, he said, "I will draw all men unto me." His last words were promises of continued help: "I will come to you;" "Abide in me and I in you;" "Without me ye can do nothing;" "If a man love me . . . my Father will love him, and *we* will come unto him and make our

abode with him." These are not the words of approaching exile, but the promise of continued presence. The Apostles never doubted that this promise was fulfilled. Peter said to Eneas, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." Paul saw Jesus near Damascus, and was taught by him in Arabia ; professed that he could do all things "through Christ which strengtheneth me," and foretold that he must reign till he had subdued every foe. The greatest conquests of the Church were wrought in the first age, before theology was born, and when to be a Christian was simply to trust in the present and eternal help of Christ. And whenever in later times the gospel has conspicuously ennobled men and saved them, the measure of its success has been the faith of men in the present Saviour.

But even this faith has been for the most part very narrowly held. The Church has believed in Christ as present in the Church, the guide of the Church, the Saviour of them that believe. The broader view of our time discerns that such a limitation is impossible for the Saviour of the world. Whatever is best in the Church is finding itself more and more akin to social forces and conditions ; and if the destinies of the Church are given into the hands of One, then the same hands must grasp and control whatever concerns the fortunes of men. In such a view Jesus Christ is the perpetual leader of every power of good in the world. Politics and legislation, commerce and agriculture,

literature, science, and art flourish by his help or shrink at his rebuke. He as much controls the Turkish war and Chinese immigration as he does the American Bible Society or the Universalist General Convention. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." He who can climb this Pisgah, looks upon the world with opened eyes. It is no longer the doubtful battle-field of forces he does not understand ; he no longer sighs out his weary lamentation, "How long, O Lord!" but he looks on the wondrous unrolling panorama of time with the vision of eternity. All things are become new, for all are under the controlling hand of Christ, and tend towards the assured end of harmony between man and God.


But all this is the external, the objective view of the Saviour's work. It is the double glory of Christ, that while he bears such matchless sway as Master and Lord he has intimate contact with each soul severally, and seeks and wins each with a love as personal and tender as if there were no soul besides. It follows from the broad view that Christ disposes those influences and opportunities which mould from without the general life of each man as a member of the race. Country, parentage, education, society, must all enter into the scheme which determines my life ; but all these I share with kindred, neighbors, and mankind. Besides these I have secret experiences within, — mine, yet not wholly of myself, —

which I must attribute to the overshadowing influence of this mighty Friend and Saviour. Let us, therefore, consider what Jesus Christ does for individual souls in the sphere of their spiritual development.

The most general operation of Christ within the souls of men is the giving of strength ; and no theory of salvation can possibly bear the test of long experience, which relies on the unaided strength of even the best and strongest men. Other ministrations of the Saviour are appropriate to special epochs in our experience ; but at all times we need the strength he gives. This is the only assurance of the loftiest saint, and the meanest sinner with this may quench all the fiery darts of the adversary. Let it then be understood that at every stage the invigorating help of Christ responds to our least desire for righteousness.

But when we attempt to pass further, the work of Christ within the soul appears more complex, because it seeks the overthrow of our manifold enemy, sin. Many of his experiences man shares with other works of God, from the gravitation which allies him with the stone, to the social instincts which link him with the bee. But sin is man's specialty ; and it is so because man alone has self-determining power. Alone of all God's earthly works, man has an initiative ; can imitate from afar the creative word, " Let there be light ! " Nothing in Nature suggests that matter

or brute intelligence offers the slightest resistance to the law of its being. We do not think of the cataract as reluctant to fall, nor of the shore as complaining that it must withstand the sea ; the beaver never grumbles at his toil, nor the bird at his long migration. Man alone can choose, and therefore he alone can resist. But when we examine why man, having the power to choose, sets his will against the will of God, (which is the essence of sin,) the inquiry takes us into unsounded depths. For this discussion it is not necessary that those depths should be essayed. It is enough to distinguish that the causes of man's sin group themselves in two classes : he either sins because he does not clearly understand the nature and the relations of his choice, or, understanding these, the self-determining will chooses to array itself against the Infinite. This is not offered as a classification according to the sharp requirements of speculative reasoning, but only as useful and sufficient for an understanding of the necessary remedies. What it here concerns us to perceive is that there are two phases of sin, for each of which the Gospel offers an ample cure, — sins of the twilight, and sins against light. And to these corresponds a double operation of the Saviour upon the souls of men, by which on the one hand he enlightens the consciousness, and on the other converts the will. To lose sight of either is fatally to mistake the process of redemption. Their work is inseparably blended ; but we



shall need to examine each in turn before we can appreciate their united power and promise.

In the first place, then, let us clearly understand that there is sin, and grievous sin, which is so largely due to human ignorance that removal of the ignorance would have prevented the sin. This is sufficiently proved by certain New Testament passages which assert it of those who crucified our Lord. Their act is presented as sin. Jesus prays for their forgiveness ; Peter tells the Jews that they "by wicked hands have crucified and slain" him ; Stephen calls them Christ's "betrayers and murderers." And yet Jesus asks their forgiveness on the ground that "they know not what they do ;" Peter tells the same Jews, "I wot, brethren, that through ignorance ye did it ;" and Paul says that if the princes of this world had known the hidden wisdom of God, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

It is not required that this essay examine minutely the question how men can be responsible for the results of their ignorance. It is enough to say that the term is not used absolutely, but relatively. An idiot does not sin, because he knows absolutely nothing. So no man can be blamed for stumbling in perfect darkness. But if it be only the darkness of twilight, in which greater caution would have saved him, the careless man may be justly blamed for falling. And the more carefully we consider,

the more widely do we see that men walk in moral twilight. Hereditary bias of mind, education, prevalent public opinion, the sophistry of others, the force of passion, the intricacy of worldly interests, — all tend powerfully to obscure the moral sense. Add to these the distracting force of sorrow and disappointment, and the contagion of evil habit in others, and how vast a portion of human wickedness is accounted for !

Now the cure for all this part of man's sin is knowledge, not certainly of the head alone, but of the heart as well, a clear and spiritual perception of the great sanctions of duty, — God's infinite goodness to us and our boundless obligation to him. All who deal practically with the degraded learn this by their experience. Christ knew it well, and hence he so often speaks of his light. Of course, very much of his illuminating ministry is of the broad and general character. His revelation of the Divine love is in the world, once for all. We need no other Calvary. In the same way he sustains the activity and constant testimony of his Church, the diffusion of the Bible and its principles, the progressive enlightenment of society, the stupendous demonstrations of divine truth which history and science from time to time afford. All this is general, like the sunlight. But a more peculiar, inward operation is needed. There is no sunlight for the blind. At every moment the sun is rising somewhere, but it is still night

for me until *my* horizon brightens. And multitudes of those who sin in ignorance are in this case. For their neighbors the sun is shining clearly, but for them there is the lack of perceptive power, a spiritual amaurosis, which makes perpetual night.

Has Christ no more for these than simply to shine upon them as he does on all? We shall find the answer if we consider how new light penetrates our own minds. Hitherto, living without some portion of truth, I have thought my system complete; when suddenly a suggestive word, an unusual event, or the untraced action of my mind brings to me a new perception, as authentic and imperative as any. I see that this also is truth. And yet if I try to explain this process I do not fully succeed. I can only say that I now see what I never saw before, though it was always true. It would seem, therefore, that a certain grade of development is needed before the mind can grasp a given truth; so that only he who knows what is in man can tell what length of time and what kind of experience are the necessary conditions of seeing that which is before our eyes. Hence the simplest explanation is that those who seem blind on this side or that have not yet grown to full capacity of vision; and it must be an inseparable part of his function who came to enlighten the world, that he should direct and further in each soul severally this process of attainment. Let us therefore con-

ceive Christ as perpetually giving not only light, but sight ; and this with all the breadth of administration and all the minuteness of detail which have been already suggested as marking his work.

It is important to consider how far he may carry this. It is coming to be admitted that for the heathen, and for those whom their surroundings imperatively restrain from knowing the revelation of God in Christ, there must remain a future opportunity to see and believe. In every world the healing touch of Christ must reach forth to those who were born blind. But why to them alone? It is the cardinal point of the Gospel that Jesus Christ came to save sinners. And since one of the surest effects of sin is to produce that spiritual blindness which stands in the way of repentance, what office can better fit the Saviour of sinners than to restore this palsied sense, and give sight anew to those who have blinded themselves? And how can death intercept the saving work of him who "hath abolished death"?

Here then is the answer to that portentous formula which has been proclaimed as the impregnable fortress of those despairing doctrines that limit the success of Christ. "Repeated sin impairs the judgment, and the impaired judgment sins again." It is sadly and tremendously true. Entangled in this knot, the sinner grows less and less able to free himself. But "This is a faithful

saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to "cut this knot. Whenever a sinner has been saved who had not been wilfully sinning against light, this has been done for him; and whenever this shall be done for any such sinner, he will be saved. Of course we can seldom trace the details of the process. We cannot often tell why our own convictions were formed at the time they were, and not before or after. Some happy combination of experience which we did not arrange, some stroke from a hidden hand, opens our vision wider, and reveals at once the truth we newly see and the grace which leads us. Upon the Saviour of the world is laid the sublime duty of doing this in every particular for every human soul. In the vast survey the imaginary limit of death fades from view. Lord of all worlds, no bounds can stay him. He labors and waits; now leading his beloved pupils through the travail of long experience, now flashing the destined glory on their eyes which see at last. It is a mean and captious spirit which arrays itself with bristling questions of When and Where and How. It is the highest nobility of Christian faith, which believes that to every Bartimeus Jesus of Nazareth will come at last with quickening touch.

But the saddest view of sin remains. However large we may estimate the share of ignorance to be in this dark picture, it still is true that sin is not simply a mistake, —

it includes the will opposed to God. We cannot often, perhaps we never can, wholly separate the two. Probably the most wilful sinner sees through a glass darkly. But he has had a happy experience who cannot recall hours when, with remembrance of the past and with thought of God, he yet sinned for no other perceptible reason than that he did not heartily will to refrain. It is not easy to analyze this process. He who has done it presently wonders why. The simple fact is that the will, seeing before it the way of duty and another way, chooses unconstrained the other. Expected pleasure and force of habit count for much, but the perversity of sin sometimes opposes them both; and perhaps, at the bottom of all, the determining motive of wilful sin is the fascination of self-asserting defiance. It is exhilarating to oppose and silence a man; and the greater his power the keener the thrill. Suppose, then, I defy and silence the mightiest power I know, — that voice within!

Now if there are degrees in the Saviour's love, and if we may form any conception of its workings from the analogy of human affection, it is towards these sturdy sinners that he will most unconquerably yearn. Saul is the chosen vessel. But what can Christ do for them? We do not know that force can bend the will. It can of course produce compliance, but we have no reason to suppose that even Infinite force can compel real assent.

And yet the will can certainly be bent, and by what we call the feeblest of agencies. Alexander conquers the world, but Thais leads him at her whim ; the father rules the family, but the baby rules the father. Or, on the nobler side, we all know how great is the influence of a respected and honored friend. The reasons which seemed trifling in another mouth are invincible when he presents them ; our stubbornest resolution melts away when he entreats. This is not compulsion but persuasion ; and it produces such true conversion of the will, that no promises are so much to be trusted as those given by a strong man to oblige a beloved friend. The precise method of this process of persuasion we do not know, and it is probably inscrutable. We can well trace its antecedents, we can immediately grasp its consequences ; but that supreme moment when the image of God within us says " I will," witnesses a true creative act, an absolute beginning, and is beyond our ken. Since then we cannot comprehend the act, we can no more comprehend how persuasion influences that act. But we do know that this influence is so powerful as to surpass all compulsion, and turn a will of iron. What will has ever been so stubborn, that some one had not this power over it? A favorite child, a wife or mother, some object of affection worthy or unworthy finds the hidden talisman, and the rock opens at a word.

Now this is Christ's crowning work, to win men's hearts and thereby persuade their wills into harmony with God. This is the atonement; for atonement is reconciliation, nothing more and (God be praised!) nothing less. Whatever other suggestions the word now bears are accretions from the theological stream, and no part of its vital meaning. It occurs but once in the English Testament, "Our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement,"—Rom. v. 11. But the Greek behind this much abused word is not uncommon in the Scriptures, and is elsewhere rendered reconciliation, as in 2 Cor. v. 20,—"We pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled [atoned] to God." It was for this then that Christ came, the embodiment of the Divine love, the Divine solicitude. He lived and died not to appease an impossible wrath, not to circumvent an intangible difficulty, but to fill the world with proclamation and example of the unspeakable tenderness of God. The mocking, doubting world asked in unbelief, "How much does God love his creatures?" And the cross on Calvary bore for answer the immortal splendor of these words: "God *so* loved the world." Or, as Paul tersely puts the argument of the cross, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

It is by the efficacy, then, of such love that Jesus persuades the stubborn will of men and reconciles them to

God. Nor is this any hypothetical or uncertain process. Let us recall each the moment of his life when God seemed nearest and best to him, and say whether it was attained by any calculation of results or process of reasoning, or whether it came by the sweet persuasion of Divine love. It is "by the mercies of God" that the Gospel always beseeches us. And so the Saviour besets all men with these gracious solicitations. There are many of our neighbors to whose hearts we can find no access, and can exert no persuasion on their wills. But again and again we have seen such men yield to an inward attraction,—the power of the Saviour's love insinuated into the citadel of their stubbornness by ways known only to Him who made them. What if the process is sometimes long and doubtful in our eyes? Does not almost every convert testify that he had long heard and resisted an entreating voice within, which he can resist no longer? And we little think what secret experiences are agitating the hearts of some who will not confess to us what they cannot hide from themselves.

We are to conceive, then, of the work of Christ as combining all these methods in one persistent and harmonious process. He floods the world with light, "The knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;" he directs singly and combined all the agencies of human advancement and well-being; he adjusts amid

all this through the vicissitudes of each man's life in accordance with the spiritual needs of each ; he conducts the slow unfolding in each of that visual power which alone can enable him to see the light and what the light reveals ; and when the wondrous prospect is spread full before the opened eyes, so that the awakened soul comprehends the Infinite goodness, this mighty Son of God casts about it the persuasion of entreating love, and beseeches the resisting will. Can that will, can any will, resist for ever ? Many converging lines of reasoning, and many bold utterances of revelation combine to prove that it is not given to any human will always to withstand such entreaty ; but above them all in clearness and authority stands the promise of Christ himself, signifying what death he should die : " And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." This is the work of the cross, and of that surpassing love which the cross displays.

But salvation is not complete when the causes of sin have been met by the Saviour's light and love ; for, as he actually encounters us, there are already accumulated results of past sin which encumber and defeat us. Sin produces in cumulative degrees spiritual paralysis and shameful memories. The converted will can hardly enjoy for a moment its new delight, before it is seized with a sense of its incapacity to maintain this better estate. And perhaps the entire range of human experience does not

present a disappointment more keen and bitter than that with which a soul newly desirous of virtue finds itself again in the snare of its old sin, and recognizes its palsy. Or, in happier moments of somewhat assured and tranquil virtue, how we shrink and cower in spirit as we look on the ineffaceable memory of the past, and think "That was I!" So powerful is this inheritance from our past, that if there is no deliverance from it, if the arm of Christ can only beckon and his love only entreat, then salvation is but a name, and the woe of sin eternal. But it is not so. The first impulse of the converted soul, assailed by its former tyrant, has ever been to flee to its Saviour, and it has ever found him a sure defence. So, too, the ennobling intercourse of the awakened soul with Christ, by some blessed alchemy, transmutes the shameful remembrance of past sins, when once they are truly past, into humble and adoring faith.

It is not within the purpose of this essay to trace out these processes of regeneration, nor is it permitted here to dwell upon the Christian's joy and peace in believing, the sweet satisfaction of purity regained, of fears replaced by faith, the happy present and the nameless glory of the future. It must suffice to have suggested the far-reaching outline of the perfect work of Jesus. When, where, by what details of method it will be achieved, concerns us little. It is the priceless treasure of our faith that the

Saviour cannot desist from this reconciling work until every soul that God has made shall be, through all its depths, in harmony with him. The task is vast and difficult beyond conception, and its accomplishment would be plainly impossible if it were committed to any weaker hands than those of the Son of God. The malignity and tenacity of sin, the hardness of human hearts, the unimaginable depths of human ignorance, the slowness with which the weary ages drag their length along, developing constantly new forms of sin and new discouragements, — lay upon us in our times of weakness the terrors of a nightmare, and paralyze the voice of faith. But presently a loving touch breaks the fearful spell, and the voice which saved us of old now quickens us again, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me."

REPENTANCE, FORGIVENESS, SALVATION.

BY E. C. SWEETSER.

AMONG the many subjects which engage human attention, none is more important than the one now before us. Salvation—the word being used in its most comprehensive and scriptural meaning—is the noblest theme which our minds can dwell on, and the worthiest object which our souls can pursue. Its accomplishment for all mankind is the purpose for which Jesus Christ came into the world ; it is that for which he lived and labored, suffered, died, and rose again ; it is that for which, when he ascended up on high, he gave gifts unto men, and established the Church, with its “differences of administrations” and “diversities of operations ;” and it is that for which the Church, in its various branches, exists and works at the present day. Universalist Christians keep this purpose in view not less, at least, than those of other denominations. Like every true follower of him whom the Father sent “to be the Saviour of the world,” the Universalist labors with an eye that is single to what he supposes to be the salvation for which his

"Captain" lived and died. He differs, however, in some respects with the majority of his fellow Christians in regard to the nature of that salvation and the means by which it must be accomplished, as also in regard to the final extent of it. To set forth the Universalist idea of this subject is the purpose of the present essay.

The theme naturally divides itself into three parts: the *Nature*, the *Methods*, and the *Extent* of salvation. To the first two we shall mainly confine ourselves.

I. What is the salvation which the gospel holds out to us? Of what kind of salvation is Jesus the Captain? Not salvation from the demands of justice surely; nor salvation from the punishment which we deserve for our sins; nor from a future state of endless torment, or, in popular language, from hell. The demands of justice must be met to the uttermost, and if men deserved everlasting punishment, they would have to endure it beyond all contingency; for God's law is without variableness or shadow of turning, and He "by no means" clears the guilty (Ex. xxiv. 7). When a sin is committed, its legitimate consequences must follow inevitably. There is no possible salvation from them. God cannot, without contradicting himself, release a sinner from a jot or a tittle of the punishment which he merits, nor has He any desire to do so; for the punishment is necessary, not only to vindicate the integrity of the law, but also to subserve the

transgressor's own profit. It is demanded by mercy no less than by justice (Heb. xii. 7-10). To save a sinner from the punishment which he really deserves would be to save him from that which he is sorely in need of. Such salvation would be an injury rather than a benefit to him.

The evil from which men have need to be saved is an actual and present evil, an evil which holds them now in its grasp, enslaving their souls, preventing their progress, and shutting them out from those heavenly experiences which, otherwise, they might enjoy. It is sin itself, the arch-enemy of humanity, which has held mankind in its dreadful bondage ever since the world began. Sin is, demonstrably, the source of nearly all our woes ; and to one who understands its nature, it is evident that, apart from its terrible sequences, it is itself the worst of evils, the thing from which we need salvation far more than from any thing else that concerns us. The Bible teaches that sinners are lost, — not simply that they will be lost, or that they are in danger of being lost, but that they *are* lost by the simple fact of being in sin, — lost to virtue, lost to truth, lost to the higher joys of life, — yes, even lost to life itself. It calls them "dead" (Eph. ii. 11), and speaks of them as being in their "graves" (Ezek. xxxvii. 12) and in a state of "corruption" (Rom. viii. 21). Christ's mission was to save mankind from this lost condition, this condition of slavery, this spiritual lifelessness

and moral decay. Before he was born it was said of him by the Holy Ghost, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). When he entered upon his public ministry, it was said of him, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29); and in his first public announcement, so far as we know, of the work which he had come to do, he said, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke iv. 18-19). St. Peter said of him, "God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts iii. 26). St. John says, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7); and St. Paul says, "The grace of God, which bringeth salvation unto all men, hath appeared, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto himself, a peculiar people zealous of good works" (Titus ii. 11-14); and

again, " Grace be to you, and peace, from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father " (Gal. i. 3, 4). In each of these statements, the teaching is that the mission of Jesus is to save us from a present evil, from our worldly captivity, from our bondage to sin. There is no intimation in these, or in any other words of the Bible, that he came to save us from endless torment or from the punishment which we deserve on account of our sins. The salvation which the Bible holds up to our view is not exemption from the consequences of our sinful behavior, but redemption from the very disposition to sin ; and no one can understand the deep significance and transcendent importance of the Saviour's mission unless he looks upon sin from a Biblical stand-point, as being not merely an occasion of punishment, but itself the most hideous and hateful of things. He who thinks only of being saved from future torment, and who, were it not for his fear of hell, would choose to continue in his sins, has yet to learn the alphabet of Christian salvation.

But sin is not the only thing which we need to be saved from. Mere sinlessness is by no means the equivalent of salvation. A saint in possession of his heavenly inheritance is something more than a babe in its cradle. He

has something more than innocence to present before the throne of God. He has wisdom ; he has virtue ; he has love ; he has holiness ; he is " perfect and entire, wanting nothing " (James i. 4). By nature we are lacking in almost every thing which is necessary to our inheritance of the heavenly kingdom. Though we are children of God and heirs of His glory, destined at last to reign with Him in righteousness and peace and joy, yet at present we are unable to possess the inheritance, not only because of our sinfulness, but also because of our ignorance, our weakness, and our general state of imperfection. We come into this world, not in a state of total depravity, but in a state of total imperfection, having no knowledge, no strength, no virtue, no graces,—mere living souls, like the first man Adam. Our powers are all in embryo, and though at first we are unconscious of the vast disparity between what we are and what we are meant to be, yet it soon becomes more or less apparent, and causes us more or less trouble and misery. We find ourselves hindered on every side by a sense of our inability, incompleteness, and insufficiency. Our aspirations far exceed our attainments, and, like caged birds, which, longing for the open air, beat vainly against their prison bars, we fret and strive against the restrictions which the imperfection of our nature imposes upon us. We cannot be completely at peace until those restrictions are taken away.

To be saved in the highest sense of the word, we must be freed not only from our sins, but from every kind of imperfection. And such is the salvation to which Jesus calls us ; such is the salvation of which he is the Captain. To lead us into such salvation, he came into the world as a feeble babe, taking not upon himself the nature of angels, but the nature of men, being born as we are born, into a condition of imperfection like that of every other babe, that he might grow up into perfectness, being "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin," and gradually developing into that God-like completeness of character which crowned him in the last years of his life upon earth. Thus he became "the way, and the truth, and the life" for our guidance. In his progress from innocence to holiness, from imperfection to perfection, the true course of salvation is plainly marked out for us. To be truly saved, we must follow him, and to be fully saved, we must become perfect as he is. When he gave gifts unto men, and established the Church with its various offices, it was that we might "all come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13). Nothing less than that is a full salvation, and until that is attained, the most faithful disciple falls short of his calling, and has need to press onward towards the mark, that he may

apprehend that for which also he is apprehended of Christ Jesus.

If, instead of looking beyond the grave, and imagining an awful judgment day when some will be cast away to suffer everlasting torment, mankind would fix their thoughts on Jesus and compare themselves with his perfection, they would see very clearly how great a salvation they are really in need of. Tried even by his unaided conscience, every person is self-condemned ; but tried by the life of Jesus Christ, the best of men are found so faulty that when they look into the depths of their souls, they feel like smiting their breasts, as the publican did, and praying, "God be merciful to me a sinner !" For as a drop of water which seems perfectly clear to the unassisted eye is seen to be full of wriggling creatures when tested by the microscope, so many of our thoughts and ways, which seem to be quite right when tried by common human standards, appear full of faultiness when tested by the life of Jesus. None may abide the day of his coming ; none may stand when he appeareth : for there is none perfect, — no, not one. But, even as our Father in heaven is perfect, so we must be perfect, before we can say that we need no salvation.

II. Such being the true nature of the salvation which we need, its attainment evidently does not depend upon the place which we may occupy, or upon any external

conditions whatever. It is a matter of character, not of locality,—of inward being and spiritual experience, not of outward circumstances. To transport an imperfect and sinful man to a place called heaven would not be to save him, though the place might be all that the poets have pictured it, and though he might be permitted to stay there for ever. He would still need salvation as much as before. The realm of salvation is that of which the Master said, "Neither shall they say, Lo here ! or lo there ! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke xvii. 21).

And as salvation cannot be obtained by any change of locality, neither can it be obtained by any commercial arrangement or system of transfer, such as the scheme of vicarious atonement proposes. To be truly saved, a person must possess not imputed righteousness, but personal righteousness ; he himself must be holy, and holiness is a thing which cannot be transferred. As well may a man be saved from sickness by having the health of his physician imputed to him as from his imperfection and his sins by having the righteousness of Jesus imputed to him. It is an impossibility. Such salvation would be fictitious, a delusion or a pretence, having no practical value.

In order to be truly saved, each person must work out his own salvation within his own soul, putting off the old

man with all his sins and imperfections, and putting on a new man, created after God's likeness in righteousness and true holiness. It cannot be accomplished in a single hour, as, for example, on a dying bed ; it is a life long process, calling for constant consecration, daily struggle, hourly prayer and sacrifice. It may be begun at any time, but it cannot be finished on this side of the grave.

A preliminary step in obtaining salvation is to get God's *forgiveness* for sins that are past. Every sin which a person commits is a barrier between his soul and God : it makes him a subject of God's displeasure, and prevents him from having that oneness with God, that freedom of communion with Him, which is the primary joy of a true state of salvation. To obtain that freedom of communion and consequent joy in the Holy Ghost, he must not only cease to sin, but he must secure the removal of the barrier which already exists on account of the sins which he has already committed ; and that is something which he alone cannot accomplish. A sin, once committed, cannot be undone. The person who committed it can never revoke it, and it must stand as a barrier between him and his God, alienating him from the favor of God, till God Himself, against whom the sin has been committed, sees fit to remit it, to put it away, or, in other words, to forgive it ; for that is what for-

giveness means.¹ To forgive a sin is like forgiving a debt; and as a creditor, in his kindness towards an insolvent debtor, may blot out the account which he holds against him, making it as though it had not been, so far as their personal relations are concerned, so God, upon our fulfilment of a certain condition, will forgive all the sins which we have committed, against Him, blotting them, as it were, out of the book of His memory, putting them away from between Him and us, suffering them no longer to be a cause of condemnation to us, but taking us as fully into His favor as if we had not sinned against Him. Of course, He cannot blot out the fact that the sins have been committed, nor will He absolutely blot them out of His memory; but in so far as they are a barrier between us and Him, He will make them as though they had not been. He will remember them but He will not remember them "against us" (Ps. lxxix. 8); they shall not be mentioned unto us (Ezek. xxxiii. 16); He will cherish no displeasure towards us on account of them (Rom. viii. 1); they shall be to us as if they were cast into the depths of the sea (Micah vii. 19).

¹ The Greek word which is translated "forgiveness" in our English version of the Bible is ἀφεσις (aphesis), which literally means a *sending away* or a *putting away*; and the primary meaning of the word "forgive" is to *give away* or to *resign*, from which comes its secondary meaning to *give up*. When predicated of sin, it signifies the removal of the barrier which the sin has constituted between him by whom it was committed and Him against whom it was committed.

The only thing which we have to do in order to obtain such forgiveness of our sins is simply to *repent* of them. Repentance, however, is indispensable. There is no forgiveness for the sins which we continue to cherish. Christ was not sent to declare forgiveness of the sins which we persist in, but only "to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past" (Rom. iii. 25). To ask God to put away our sins from before His face, to count them as nothing, and to be well pleased with us while we wilfully continue in them, would be to insult His purity, and do despite to His loving-kindness. But whenever we sincerely repent of our sins, God freely forgives them. He puts them away from between Him and us. He does not suffer them to hinder our communion with Him. He is no longer displeased with us because of them, but takes us fully into His favor. He might do otherwise, were He otherwise disposed. If He were vengeful in His disposition, He might treasure up anger against us on account of the sins which we have committed against Him, and refuse to take us into favor notwithstanding our repentance. He might treat us as we are apt to treat each other, as the unforgiving steward treated his debtor, taking him by the throat, and casting him into prison, because he could not pay the debt. This, indeed, is the way in which, according to the theology of the churches which mo-

nopolize the title "Evangelical," He surely would have treated us, had not Jesus Christ interfered to protect us. We are taught by the creeds of these churches that mankind, by their sins, had accumulated an infinite debt to their Maker, a debt which they could never pay, and that He, in His wrath, was determined to cast them into hell, there to suffer endless torment, — a fate which would surely have happened to all men, had not Jesus Christ, by his death on the cross, paid off the debt for as many of them as may unite themselves to him in the life that now is, and a fate which will still be the portion of those who do not thus take refuge from it.¹ According to this doctrine, God is both a Shylock and a Caiaphas in His character, relentlessly demanding His pound of flesh, and as willing to take it from the breast of the innocent as from that of the guilty. The Bible, however,

¹ As an illustration of this doctrine the following, from Mr. Spurgeon, may here be quoted: "We read in the papers lately how a man was saved from being shot. He had been condemned in a Spanish court, but, being an American citizen and also of English birth, the consuls of the two countries interposed, and declared that the Spanish authorities had no power to put him to death; and what did they do to secure his life? They wrapped him up in their flags; they covered him with the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack, and defied the executioners. There stood the man and before him the soldiery; and, though a shot might have ended his life, yet he was as invulnerable as though in a coat of triple steel. Even so Jesus Christ has taken my poor guilty soul ever since I believed in him, and has wrapped around me the blood-red flag of his atoning sacrifice; and before God can destroy me, or any other soul that is wrapped in the atonement, He must insult His own son, and dishonour his sacrifice, and that He will never do, blessed be His name."

gives no support to such a doctrine. Its teaching uniformly is that God, of His own free grace and pleasure, immediately forgives all sins upon the simple condition of the sinner's repentance. He asks no further satisfaction. This is the teaching of both Testaments. When God made His covenant with Solomon at the dedication of the temple, He said, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin" (2 Chron. vii. 14). When John the Baptist came to prepare the way for Jesus, he preached "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark i. 4); and when Jesus, after his resurrection, instructed his disciples what to preach in his name, it was in the same short and simple formula, to which, however, he had given such new power and meaning,—the message of "repentance and remission of sins" (Luke xxiv. 47).

As to repentance, let it be distinguished from that which sometimes takes the name. True repentance is not mere sorrow for the sins which we have committed: it is not a mere wish that we had kept ourselves pure; nor is it remorse or despair. A person may be sorry for his sins for selfish reasons, simply on account of the pain which they cause him. He may be sorry for them for conscientious reasons, and still lack the necessary

will to break loose from them. Or, he may be sorry for them with such a feeling of self-reproach and detestation as to try to break loose from them by putting an end to his own existence ; but such sorrow is not true repentance. True repentance springs from a conscience which is quickened by love, and proves itself by works of love. Its motive is unselfish, and its result is a sincere endeavor to do the Heavenly Father's will. He who truly repents of his sins views them not merely as acts of folly, involving painful consequences ; nor merely as offences against the law of right and duty, involving a sense of personal guiltiness ; but chiefly as offences against God's love, involving ingratitude towards Him and unfilial alienation from Him. His repentance is not directed towards himself, nor towards an abstract law of justice, nor towards any unknowable "power not ourselves which makes for righteousness:" it is directed towards a personal Being, against whose love he has offended ; it is "repentance towards God" (Acts xx. 21), and involves not only a feeling of shame and of sorrow on account of the sin, but also a desire to make reparation, so far as possible, by a future course of loving conduct. True repentance leads the sinner to seek the face of God, saying, "Father, I have sinned in Thy sight," and "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do." It is not such a state of mind and soul as that which drove Judas to go forth and

hang himself, but such as that which led Peter, in answer to Christ's look of love, to go out and weep bitterly, and afterwards to devote his life to the upbuilding of his Master's kingdom.

We cannot truly repent towards God unless we love Him, and unless we do repent towards Him, He will not and cannot forgive us our sins; but when we do repent towards Him, humbly confessing our ungrateful transgressions, and returning, in a spirit of filial love, to the path of duty and devotion, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9). When we have repented and received forgiveness, we are already saved to a certain extent, and have taken the first and principal step towards a final and complete salvation. We are saved from some sin and from alienation from God; and, in order to be saved from all sin and imperfection, we have only to continue in the path of obedience to God's holy laws, using the various means of progress which He, in His infinite goodness, provides for us, and looking steadily unto Jesus, as a runner looks steadily unto his goal.

These truths are set forth with incomparable force and beauty in the immortal parable of the prodigal son. The prodigal was a sinner, and a type of all sinners, lost in the mazes of transgression and iniquity. He needed salvation, not from the demands of justice in another

world, not from a future state of endless torment, but from the state which he was then in ; and how did he get it? Simply by repentance and by works that were meet for repentance. He came to himself, was sincerely sorry for the sins which he had committed against his father's loving-kindness, and, with a humble, contrite, and affectionate spirit, returned to his father, confessed his sins, and asked — or would have asked if his father had not anticipated him — for the privilege of a servant's place. In answer to his penitence, he immediately received forgiveness. His father cherished no spite against him, no bitterness, no wrath, no desire for revenge, but took him at once to his arms of love, and gave him an honored place in the household. He was saved from his lost and dead condition, as every sinner may be saved if he will likewise repent and seek his Heavenly Father's face. Repentance will always be followed by forgiveness, and repentance and forgiveness will be followed by salvation ; or, rather, the three processes will be simultaneous. There is no interval between them. In the very act of repentance, we obtain forgiveness and salvation.

Let it be re-emphasized, however, that such salvation is not complete. The prodigal son, when restored to his father's house and favor, though saved from his prodigality and from his state of sinful alienation, was sorely

in need of still further salvation. For the natural effects of his prodigality must have clung to him long after his return to sobriety, and have hindered him from enjoying the estate of perfection. Repentance and forgiveness restored him to his father's house, but they could not restore the money which he had wasted in riotous living, nor restore at once his shattered health, nor repair the injury which he had done to his spiritual nature by perverting its powers and stunting its growth. He was not the same man that he would have been had he not wasted his substance in the service of sin. After living on husks till he was reduced to a skeleton, he needed something more than repentance and forgiveness to make him a sound and perfect man. Nothing but a long course of patient obedience to the laws of right living could complete his salvation. And so it is with all of us. By repentance and forgiveness we enter the Kingdom ; but, having entered, we must go on and on in the living way, working out more and more of our promised salvation till at last we are perfect as our Captain is perfect. We may be partially saved in the life that now is, but only in the life which is to come can we attain the full measure of the stature of Christ. How long it will take, we do not know. It is enough that we know the eternal conditions.

If it be objected that no mention has been made of salvation by faith, the answer is, that the necessity of

faith has been taken for granted in all that has been thus far said, and so too with the agency of Christ in the matter. When we say that each person must work out his own salvation, and that forgiveness will be granted to repentance alone, we by no means make void the necessity of faith or of the mediatorial work of Jesus. On the contrary, we establish that necessity; for faith in God as revealed in Christ is requisite to true repentance. We cannot go to our Heavenly Father in a spirit of true penitence unless we "believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him," (Heb. xi. 16); and we cannot believe that He is our Heavenly Father unless we believe in Christ His Son, through whom alone His paternal character has been clearly revealed to us (Matt. xi. 27). Faith is the background of repentance; but as a background without a picture is useless, so faith is useless unless it leads to repentance and to works that are meet for repentance. Faith has saving efficacy only when it "works by love" (Gal. v. 6). In order to be fully saved, we must "add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness charity" (2 Peter i. 15-17).

If again it be objected that nothing has been said about salvation by grace, the answer is that it also has

been implied. God's grace is the primal and universal force which lies behind and within the whole process of salvation, — behind our faith, our repentance, the forgiveness of our sins, our growth in knowledge, our works of love. Without it, we could do nothing, and would be nothing. But this does not militate against the fact that each person must work out his own salvation. On the contrary, we are told to work out our own salvation for the very reason that God works *in us* to accomplish His pleasure (Phil. ii. 12, 13). He will save us in no other way. He will simply help us to help ourselves, which, with God as with man, is the best kind of charity. He will no more save us without our own effort than He will give us a harvest without our tilling of the soil. He is indeed the God of harvests, and without His influence none would grow; but in order to obtain a harvest the husbandman must plant and cultivate. And so in regard to the work of salvation: we are "God's husbandry," and He is our Saviour, first and last. By His grace we are saved; but only as we utilize it, only as we obey its unchanging conditions. We must work with God, in order that God may work with us. As to His part of the process, there is no room for uncertainty. His grace is unfailing. Where sin abounds, His infinite love much more abounds; and whenever we choose to avail ourselves of it, we shall find it sufficient for our needs. He yearns over us with an infinite longing

for our salvation, and will not be satisfied till the whole human family is perfected and glorified. He has made us for salvation ; and, unless we all are saved at last, His work will be a failure, and His heart will be for ever sad. So, although His power to save us is contingent upon our voluntary obedience to the conditions of salvation, yet, in view of all of the facts in the case, we cannot reasonably doubt that His purpose concerning us will at last be fulfilled. Such are the resources of his fatherly love that he will finally draw all men unto Him. Jesus shall "see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied" (Isaiah liii. 11). He "shall save his people from their sins ;" and his people are all men from the fact that he was human-born. Through the influence of the Holy Spirit, which will be shed abroad in their hearts, all men will believe and repent and obey. Then will the creation no longer groan and travail in pain together, but the tabernacle of God will be with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, nor any more pain ; for the former things shall have passed away (Rev. xxi. 3, 4). All things will be made new, and the whole creation will be delivered from sin and death and every form of imperfection into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

PUNISHMENT.

BY ASA SAXE, D.D.

TO those who press their inquiries to any considerable extent into the subject, it is evident that punishment is a great fact in the moral administration of the world. It seems to inhere in the very idea of a moral system. Let it be granted that God is a moral being, and that man, whom he has undertaken to govern, is a moral being also, and it will follow that moral law must grow as a necessity out of the relations of governor and governed. Hence, penalty, whose sequence is punishment, must form an essential part of any valid body of morals.

Penalty, the enforcement of which is punishment, is necessary to give validity to any law. In fact, an enactment without a penalty is not a law. It lacks one of the cardinal elements of law. It sometimes occurs that human legislators neglect to attach a penalty to an enactment, when of course it transpires that, notwithstanding the gravity of the subject to which it relates, practically it is a nullity. Even in the realm of physics, a law without a penalty would be void. That is to say, a law would be

in fact no law at all, which, whether obeyed or disobeyed, enforced or unenforced, leaves the result precisely the same. A law, whether physical, organic, or moral, is a principle or a demand which issues in certain definite results. When the law is set at defiance, not only are the legitimate results not realized, but damage and disaster accrue in proportion to the importance and sanctity of the law infringed. This principle is founded in the nature of things, and is therefore a fundamental in morals. There could be no such thing as morals, were there no such factor as punishment, and did obedience and disobedience lead to the same results, and ripen into the same fruit.

Punishment, then, must have a place in any complete theological system. For a theological system is an attempt to define the nature of God, and his relations to humanity, thus encompassing the whole domain of morals; and it would be obviously deficient without that which is essential to give vitality to all law. It should therefore have a very prominent place.

Punishment may be defined to be the infliction of the penalty attached to disobedience. But we should be careful to discriminate between it and hatred and vengeance. To many, suffering inflicted, and hatred on the part of him by whom it is inflicted, are synonymous. Especially has it been conceived by those who have but a limited grasp of the subject, that punishment inflicted

upon a human soul by the Divine Being is indicative of his hatred for that soul ; and the figurative language of the Bible, wherein God is described as taking vengeance, has been the favorite form by which to set it forth, in forgetfulness of that fitter and completer Scriptural statement, "Whom the Lord *loveth* he chasteneth." We fall into the gravest of all possible errors when we confound severity with unkindness. It is the purpose for which severity is visited which must determine whether it is kind or unkind. If it is for the purpose of benefiting the one on whom it is inflicted, instead of its being an unkindness, the withholding of it would be a most conspicuous manifestation of that temper. Hatred and vengeance, unquestionably, have severe methods of expressing themselves ; and, when backed by competent power, it is truly an awful thing to fall under their visitations. In human history, these passions have played a prominent part ; and, when they have come in conflict in great crises, the concussion has been something tremendous, with the echoes reverberating through distant generations.

But, terrible as are the inflictions of vengeance, they pale often before the supreme severity of love. There is nothing so relentless and terrific to the wilful doer of evil as the methods it may adopt for the accomplishment of its ends. Punishment in the divine economy, then, is not the manifestation of hatred, but the sign and instrument of love.

When we approach the methods of divine punishment, we open a vast theme, the full unfolding of which would require volumes. We can only touch upon it here. In general terms, it may be said that, by a law impressed upon human nature, the consequences of sin are made its punishment. Moral philosophers solve the problem by an application of the inseparable relations of cause and effect. God does not resort to factious means, he does not depend upon the rod of outward chastisement, nor has he any need to travel outside of the beaten path of established law to bring the pressure of punishment upon a sinning soul; for he has prepared more awful scourges within the individual consciousness: the wounds, the damage, the shame which sin impresses, the natural and irreversible consequences which flow from it, are sufficient. But it is necessary that we make some discrimination in regard to these consequences as they appear on the surface of things, or we shall fall into error. It will not do to say that all the consequences of sin are to be ranked as its punishment, although in a remote sense they are such, and will be made the instruments of its infliction. It would hardly be proper, for example, to call the physical consequences of sin a part of its punishment. Certain sins lead to very grave physical results, to bodily disease, imbecility, insanity. But these are not necessarily connected with sin at all. Intemperance and impurity may

sap the foundations of health and drain the brain of its juices, ending in delirium and death ; and so may these terrible conditions be superinduced while the soul is guiltless of any wrong or guile. The very diseases which these sins bring may come upon one wholly innocent. Wicked excesses may shatter the nerves and destroy the mind, and so may an accidental injury to the spine. A murderous blow may destroy the life of a man, and so may a stroke of lightning, or any unforeseen and unavoidable casualty. In the one case there is no sin, while in the other there is the darkest form of it. The physical consequences, however, are the same. It cannot be possible that a form of suffering which is the result of accident, and is inflicted upon the innocent, can be reckoned as forming an essential part of the punishment of the guilty. Physical disease and pain are the direct result of the violation of some physical or organic law, and they are precisely the same whether moral guilt or accident or any other cause has wrought them.


A man in a moment of passion strikes a blow which causes the death of his own son. It might be said the loss of his son, which to any parent would be a supreme bereavement, is in part his punishment. But, supposing the son is killed by accident, he loses him all the same ; and, so far as the loss is concerned, he suffers the same in one case as the other. The mere fact that he has lost the com-

panionship of his child cannot enter directly into the punishment for his sin. In short, punishment for sin must be something entirely distinct from any thing which the innocent experience. It cannot therefore consist of any form of temporal calamity or bodily distress ; for these in countless variety and in every conceivable form come upon the innocent as well as the guilty. Punishment for sin is an experience wholly within the soul. It is something purely moral and spiritual. It is not simply mental distress, for this may come upon the innocent ; but it is a peculiar kind of mental distress. It is not simply regret for the wrong done because it has resulted in evil, but it is remorse for the wrong because it is wrong.

Now sin may lead to other forms of suffering. And so may innocence. But, let it be reiterated, innocence and transgression are never visited with the same stripes. There is a lash prepared for the guilty which never can touch any but the guilty, — viz., the lash of remorse. Nevertheless, the external consequences of wrong-doing may be made the instruments of intensifying remorse. When conscience unsheathes its flaming sword, its terribleness will be magnified by a consciousness of the harm to ourselves and others which our wrongs have wrought. We learn to recognize sin by the harm it does. That which neither directly nor remotely does any harm cannot be sinful. When we awake to a consciousness of

our sins, we must do so in connection with a realization and survey of their baleful consequences ; and the sting of remorse is embittered by them, no doubt. And thus they are made the instruments of torture to the stricken spirit ; nevertheless, the torture, the punishment, is remorse.

The object of punishment is twofold. Its intention is to deter from sin and to recover from sin. To the end that the first purpose may be served, the penalty for transgression, from the beginning, has been clearly enunciated. " In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," was the divine announcement before the first sin had been committed ; and it was the voice of warning and for the purpose of restraint. The publication and unfolding of penalty is always with reference to this, albeit its infliction has reference chiefly to the recovery of the sinner. The penalty is uncovered and made conspicuous, that the soul may have timely warning of the danger, as destructive reefs are buoyed and channels marked out for the safety of navigators. It is true this is a direct appeal to fear, which is recognized as one of the baser elements of human nature, and therefore objected to by some, who hold that it would be unworthy God to address any but the highest motives to men. But, whether base or exalted, we do find the motive of fear occupying a prominent place among the incentives which are constantly determining human conduct and by which human character is being shaped.




We are to presume that it is not there by accident, but that God wisely put it there, and therefore its use is entirely legitimate. Doubtless every string of this wonderful nature of ours may be properly touched, and, if properly touched, will contribute to the general harmony. The faculties of the soul are the constituents of a vast republic ; and every one is entitled to a voice and to its legitimate influence. It will not do, therefore, to conclude that, because a motive is not the highest, an appeal to it is either improper or debasing. Prudence, caution, fear, which are different names for a common impulse, as vigilant sentinels to give warning of the approach of danger, are neither to be ignored nor despised, even in the administration of religious influence.

It is proper that men should be deterred from sin by an apprehension of its fearful consequences, — far better that they should be thus restrained than that they should plunge into its fiery vortex to receive and inflict damage. It is better for the man thus restrained, and far better for peaceable and upright people who are protected by his restraint. It is better that a man of wicked and desperate purpose should be chained, than that he be allowed to depredate upon the property and lives of his fellow-beings, although the restraint of principle would be far better than a material fetter. But, where the higher motive is not available, the lower is legitimate and entirely salutary. It is there-

fore of very great importance that the penalty for sin should be made serious, even terrific, that it should be clearly unfolded and rigidly inflicted purely for purposes of intimidation and restraint upon people viciously inclined. This is clearly a legitimate use to which to put this potent instrument of punishment. With the present state of human development, society could not hold together without the conservative bands of this wholesome fear.

But a still higher office of punishment is its remedial power. From a philanthropic stand-point, this so far overtops the other in importance that many have recognized it as the only intent of its ordainment. Undoubtedly, the two purposes to be served so far harmonize that what is requisite to accomplish the one is fully adequate for the other. The unrest, the shame, the sorrow, which the disease of sin requires as a remedy, are ample in severity and duration to serve the purposes of restraint in the most extreme cases. Hence, while punishment is designed to be a terror to evil doers, and men suffer for sin as examples and warnings, it is nevertheless true that no suffering comes to the transgressor as the penalty of his wrong which is not needed as medicine to quench the virus of a rebellious spirit. Not a throe of pain is experienced not incident to the cure of a deep-rooted disease. Not a stripe is laid wantonly or vindictively. The tenderness of God would not permit a single pang which had not a



kind purpose behind it, nor one not absolutely necessitated by the exigencies of the case. Any suffering, however slight, not sanctified by such purpose and necessity, would be incompatible with the character of God as Christianity unfolds it. There has been much speculation as to whether any such necessity really exists, and whether God might not have ordained a different and easier process for the recovery of lost souls. It is not an easy task to determine what God might or might not have done, and a proper modesty perhaps would forbid that we make the attempt; yet admitting the facts of human nature and experience, admitting the moral responsibility of the soul, and that in the exercise of that responsibility it has lapsed into sin, it is not easy to perceive how it can be brought out of that condition, without practically destroying its moral freedom and responsibility, by a process essentially different from the one which has been chosen. It certainly is not easy to see how the result can be wrought without the suffering of punishment. A sinful soul, in order to have the impulse of reformation quickened in it, must be made in some way to feel that wickedness is not the best and most desirable condition to be in; on the contrary, it must be made to feel that it is the worst and most unsatisfactory condition possible. In order to produce this feeling, disquietude and suffering must come. The disquietude and suffering must be intimately associated in the

sinner's mind with the practices and tendencies of his life. He must be made to realize that disquietude and dissatisfaction are stinging him because he is on the wrong road and headed in the wrong direction. Nor can the conception of virtue be had, or the impulse thereto, until there is a clear realization of the sinfulness of sin, and the regret, the shame, the remorse which this realization engenders. Punishment, then, becomes, if not the cause, most certainly a necessary adjunct and promoter of human reformation. In all its phases, its touch is healing and health-inspiring. It is one of the agencies of redemption. It is an ordeal through which debased and dead souls must pass ere they can rise into spiritual life and be rounded into holiness.

But, after all, punishment, with all its efficacy as a redemptive agent, is not clothed with full regenerative power. It has been very properly likened to medicine, which is often bitter, but always administered for the purpose of healing. Medicine alone, however, never can work a cure. At most, it can only clear away obstructions and help the vital and recuperative powers of nature to assert themselves and do their work. So of punishment. Of itself, it can only clear a field for the operation of other and mightier forces. There should be a clear distinction made between the *impulse* to a new life derived from the bitter experience of the fruit of sin and the *power* by which such change is effected. The impulse to the achievement of a thing

does not imply the power to achieve it. Men have been impelled to undertake many things which they have found no means of accomplishing. They have been impelled, by a hunger for knowledge, to learn whether the planets are inhabited, and, if so, by what sort of beings, but the impulse has not been able to produce a glass of sufficient power to unfold the mystery. They have been impelled, by a realization of the great uses to which it might be put, to the discovery of the principle of perpetual motion, but with no result whatever but disappointment. The impulse has been upon theologians from time immemorial to solve the problems of divine sovereignty and human agency; brains have sweat, and intellectual swords wielded by giants have been crossed, without even an approximation to success. A still stronger impulse was upon a dying world to penetrate the secrets of the hereafter and discover immortality; but notwithstanding the inexorable necessity, and the yearning, the intensity of which is set forth by the striking figure of *travail*, no man ever opened that mysterious iron door until Jesus furnished the key. The impulse to achieve is one thing, and the power to achieve is clearly another thing. The punishment of sin when it culminates in its sharpest crises superinduces supreme dissatisfaction on the part of the sinner with his condition. It kindles a longing for something better, — for moral health, reformation, holiness.

But, when it has done this, it has fulfilled its office and exhausted its powers. The situation of the sinner would not be bettered, on the contrary it would be made worse, were he left with no further ministration. To make a man dissatisfied and miserable will not help him *per se*. Suffering alone never gave a man strength to resist temptation, nor spun a single fibre by which to lift him out of degradation. For all the aid it could render, he might wrestle for ever with the coils which are crushing him. It must be supplemented by other and more potent instrumentalities, for punishment alone does not and cannot save. It simply prepares the way for other forces to operate, makes the soul teachable and receptive, bringing it into an attitude where the regenerative power of the Holy Spirit can be applied. As the initiative of the work of the soul's salvation, its importance cannot be overestimated, but for the consummation of that sublime undertaking reliance must be had upon the conscious ministry of divine love. Men can only be quickened into spiritual life and realize their aspiration for holiness by the grace of God, by the direct help he vouchsafes those who seek it. To a soul surrounded by trouble and smelting in the fires of remorse, there comes the voice of encouragement. Upon the dark waves of misery shimmers the sunlight of hope. A father's countenance is beaming, and a father's strong hand is stretched forth. He who clasps that hand in

confiding trust, and he alone, can be led out of the shadow.

But what will be the duration of punishment? Will it be limited or endless? These are questions which to-day are engaging the attention and pressing upon the feelings of the world as they never have before. Among the masses, they have become living questions, and are recognized as involving imminent issues; and it is noteworthy that in their discussion they are taken outside the circle of Scriptural exegesis into the wider field of moral principle and the everlasting fitness of things. This subject is being examined by the most earnest, reverent, and critical minds, in regard to its relations to the character of God as Christianity reveals it, and to the intuitive consciousness of abstract right in men; and there seems to be a general feeling that the old doctrine of endless punishment must stand or fall as it shall be found to be in harmony or conflict with these,—must stand if it is found to be in harmony, but if in conflict must fall hopelessly, in spite of any buttress, whether Scriptural or otherwise, which can be brought to its support. It is quite clear, however, that, when brought to these tests, it breaks down utterly.

Punishment can comport with the beneficent character of God only by virtue of its beneficent purpose. If its purpose is not beneficent, then, even without any regard to the degree of its severity, it either impeaches the goodness

of the Great Being who ordained it, or it is an anomaly in creation, existing without the permission of God and in spite of his power. Regarded as an instrument for deterring men from sin and one of the agencies for the recovery of the fallen, it readily falls into harmony with our most exalted conceptions of divine goodness, wisdom, and power. But endless punishment is not beneficent; for in no way can it be made to serve a good end. For purposes of reformation, from the very nature of the case the infliction of it *must* be a failure; and, according to the old conception of the *finale* of human history, there will come a time when for purposes of restraint it will not be needed. Many seem to think that limited punishment is the same in nature and character as that which is unlimited, and that the considerations which will harmonize the former with divine goodness will harmonize the latter. But this is by no means true. Endless punishment is not the *principle* of restraint and cure, which is so clearly compatible with eternal right, simply perpetuated without limit as some have apprehended it, but it is essentially and radically a different thing. If it be conceded that punishment is a divine method of deterring from sin and saving the lost, that it was ordained for that purpose and that only, then *endless* punishment is a misnomer. There might be endless suffering, but it could only be characterized as endless revenge, and not punishment. Let it be

emphasized, according to any wholesome definition of punishment, any at all in harmony with Christian principle, it must from the very nature of the case be limited in duration, and endless punishment is an impossibility. It would seem to be a serious thing to charge upon God the ordainment of an instrumentality which of necessity must defeat its own end, which must ultimately become useless as a restraint, and, instead of being efficient as a reformatory power, inexorably bars every avenue to reform and salvation. If it was the design of this penalty simply to perpetuate wickedness and increase the sum of human misery, it might be pronounced a pre-eminent success, while for sheer cruelty and cool diabolism it could have no parallel in fact or imagination; but, if its purpose be reform and blessing, it must be characterized as a failure, and the stupendous folly and stupidity of its enactment cannot be overstated.

If it results beneficently, as it would seem all the agencies of a beneficent God of infinite power must result, it cannot be otherwise than of limited duration; for the blessing can only come after punishment has done its complete work and its functions have ceased. If the functions of punishment are to restrain and reform, successful punishment must ultimate in restraining and reforming all men; that is to say, it must do its part in this work and then cease and determine. If any one inquires

whether punishment will be unending, basing our conclusions on these considerations, with very great confidence and emphasis a negative reply may be given. But, if the question is as to the precise date at which it will end, the answer must be, — no man can tell. The most definite thing which can be affirmed with regard to it is, it will be when it has wrought its work and accomplished its end. It will certainly have taken place when Jesus, having brought all sinners to bow in penitence and submission, having subdued all things to himself, shall deliver up the kingdom, and “God shall become all in all.” It is difficult, ay, impossible, to see any field or function for punishment beyond that jubilant consummation.

There is one other element of divine punishment, which, in order that it may reach the maximum of its restraining efficacy, should be clearly unfolded and vigorously set forth, — viz., its certainty. This great, potent instrumentality has to a large extent been shorn of its influence in religious teaching, notwithstanding the emphasis which has been thrown upon its severity, because its certainty has been reduced to the minimum. While endless punishment has been set forth as the most fearful thing of which it is possible for the human imagination to conceive, while it has been embodied in blood-curdling figures and clothed in awful rhetoric, even as an excitant of human fear, to a very considerable extent, it has proved a failure on account

of the uncertainty which has hung about it. It is not often that any man has apprehended it as something prepared for himself, while the few who have done so have usually become insane. It has never been preached as the penalty for sin which will inevitably be enforced. To do so would be to absolutely quench the hope of the world, for all have sinned. If unending suffering is denounced upon transgression, then the element of uncertainty must inhere in it, unless all men are to be its victims. Accordingly, men have been taught, not if they go into sin they will surely suffer its penalty which is endless, but that they will suffer it unless they repent before the day of probation shall close. This possibility of escape substantially annuls its power to stimulate restraining fear. With repentance and conversion, — a metamorphosis which may be instantaneously experienced and thus the penalty for sin entirely escaped, — the fear of hell will not be likely to weigh very heavily upon the average sinner, nor will he be very reluctant to go into forms of transgression which he is persuaded may possibly have no unpleasant consequences whatever attached to them. If we would make punishment truly appalling, we must make men feel that it is something that is sure to come in all its fulness upon the soul that sins.

It is held by many who are really well-meaning and somewhat thoughtful that it would be dangerous to the

morals of the world to have the duration of punishment relaxed or made any thing short of endless, especially if men are taught that it will issue in salvation. But in human laws it has been found that the severest have not been the most restraining, but rather those most likely to be executed. It was found that the death penalty for theft was not as efficacious to prevent the crime as something milder, which could be uniformly enforced. So it will be found that what will be lost to the power of divine punishment to deter from sin by the limitation of its duration will be more than made up by its certainty. Impress upon the human soul the fact that, although the consequence of sin is not endless suffering, it is something fearful, perhaps beyond what any man has conceived; that, fearful as it is, it is nevertheless in harmony with the divine character and sanctioned by the purest love, and such as it is will be infallibly executed, and it would seem that we shall get all the leverage from human fear for awakening and redemption that is either wholesome or needful. In fact, we get the greatest possible. It is not for the purpose of quenching or diminishing fear as an element of religious influence, but of increasing and intensifying it, that our theologies should be reconstructed, and punishment be set forth as limited, but certain. We would have it changed from an empty threat, which from its very nature and because of its fearfulness cannot *surely* be

fulfilled, to a solemn verity which can by no possibility fail.

We are persuaded that, while no religious instrumentality has ever yet unfolded the fulness of its possible strength, it is pre-eminently true that fear has not; and when divine punishment shall be truly apprehended, and when it shall have taken its proper place among the Christian forces, it will develop a potency undreamed of by any man, and do execution in the ranks of the enemy, which shall be recognized as at once unprecedented and tremendous. To exalt punishment to this place and give it this power is a work worthy the best endeavors of the Christian thinker and philanthropist.



THE RATIONALE OF SCRIPTURE EXEGESIS.

BY GEORGE HILL.

IN common with all Christians, Universalists appeal to the Scriptures as the ground of their faith and doctrine. If Christ and the Apostles did not teach the final salvation of all men, and did we not find that doctrine clearly set forth in word and spirit, in their discourses and epistles, we should have no valid authority as religious teachers, and no right to a place in the Christian Church.

It is true that there are intimations of this grand result, in the works of God, his kindly providence over man, the witness of his goodness, in the general order and beneficence of nature, as likewise in the gifts and ministrations of his spirit. The philosopher and scientist find no evidence of malignity in the laws and operations of creation. They find pain and penalty, but they come through the violation of wisely ordered law, and are intended to enforce obedience. These are physical evils incidental to organic structure, but they serve to render man alert, sharp, and self-sustaining.

They are fugitive and transient, and the more they are disclosed and understood, the more convinced we are, that the evil which does exist, is for some good purpose, and for the final blessing of all sentient beings. In the words of Leigh Hunt : "This palpable revelation of God called the universe, contains no evidence whatsoever of the thing called eternal punishment." This is the testimony of a poet ; the profoundest students of science, with scarcely an exception, express the same opinion.

But notwithstanding these facts and inferences from nature, the pillar and ground of our faith must be sought and found in the revelation of God's will and law, to moral and spiritual beings. In the scriptures of divine truth he has declared his own character, and his purposes concerning the duty and destiny of man. There is where we must look for authority and explicitness of statement. Divinely inspired scripture is given as our ground of faith and hope. Properly understood, it is a "lamp to our feet, and a light to our understanding." God speaking directly to man, we have a right to expect a more clear and explicit statement of the Divine nature, requirements, and purposes, than can be found in nature. Hence, for certainty and authority, in faith and duty, we go to the Bible and rest our cause on what it truly teaches.

But Christians of all denominations make the same appeal, with similar confidence, drawing thence doctrines

variant and contradictory, giving the appearance to one unskilled in the proper rules of interpretation, of the worthlessness of the authority of common appeal. There are radical and hostile differences in the vital doctrines of Christian sects ; infidelity thrives on them ; indifference and immorality take advantage of them. The quarrels and controversies of the different branches of the Church are its greatest hindrance to progress in its work. Learned men, honest and sincere, stand up and in the name of the same God, and on the authority of the same Book, proclaim entirely opposite messages. They differ in the conception of his character, the nature and office of religion, the duty and destiny of mankind. Thoughtful people hardly see how this can be, when all have the same word and authority as the basis of their faith and teaching.

But the cause of the discrepancy is not in the letter of scripture, nor in the dishonesty of the preachers. The word of God is not contradictory, nor is Christ divided, that one says "I am of Paul, another, I am of Cephas, another, I of Apollos." These men differed in their understanding of Christ, and the correct interpretation of his religion. They were all equally honest, but none of them, with the exception of Paul, saw at once the full measure and compass of Christ's mission to our world. They drew their conclusions, as the great body of

religious teachers continues to do, from an imperfect conception of the magnitude of the grace of God in the Gospel. Bound by old prejudice, and standing on a half-truth foundation, their interpretation of Christianity fell short of its own purpose and of the needs of man. Sects have originated and grown from a similar error. Each represents a portion, but not the whole, of the truth. When men become large enough in mind and spirit to survey, and take in the whole of Christian doctrine, religious teachers will approach that "unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God," spoken of by the apostle.

This suggests that the value of the Scriptures to us, their unity and authority, depends on the principles and rules of exegesis which we follow. About many scripture doctrines, there is no controversy. All Christians believe in God, in Christ, as the Son of God and Saviour of men; they all believe in immortality, in repentance and the necessity of good works. These things are so plainly taught that the "wayfaring man though a fool need not err therein." But there are other things which require explanation, and some portions of the text which require interpretation. The Scriptures do not dogmatize, do not teach doctrines in a systematic way. Hardly any fundamental doctrine of scripture is laid down and fully elucidated, in distinctive texts. If it were, there could be no manner of mistake concerning its meaning. But God

in his word deals as with children, giving instruction through the medium of human speech, pictures drawn by imagination, parables, and spiritual visions. Revelation is subject to these peculiarities.

And here arises the opportunity for fanciful views ; for mistake and misinterpretation. It requires study to find out the word of God, and then careful judgment to rightly interpret it.

Most of the doctrinal differences between Universalists and their opposers, arise from different principles of exegesis. We hold to the integrity of the Word of God as firmly as they, but from our stand-point, the word discloses a different message and significance to us. We are not open to the charge of infidelity because we insist upon a broader and more liberal basis of interpretation than that adopted by the Church in the darker and more superstitious ages of the world. The science of theology is progressive. Knowledge and the growth of the human mind unfold more clearly the character and revelation of God.

It is not therefore presumptuous in Universalists, coming to the Scriptures as they do, after centuries of doubt, dispute and unrest, modestly to claim that they discern the cause of past error, and think they are able to bring an improved exegesis of divine revelation. We cast aside what has proved itself of no avail, and seek the truth, through those means and methods given by the author of truth itself.

Universalists in their interpretation of Scripture are governed by the following general rules, viz. —

1. God's word must be interpreted as consistent with itself.

2. It must be interpreted as consistent with his own character.


3. It must be interpreted as consistent with reason and moral intuition.

1. The object of Divine Revelation is to "acquaint man with God," teaching him the way of life, and bringing him to holiness and happiness. To this end, God has revealed his character as a righteous and holy Being. The leading thought of the Bible is the purity and righteousness of its Divine Author. The unfolding of this fact is the foundation on which he claims to be God, and to demand the confidence and worship of mankind. In the very earliest ages of revelation, while men's spiritual conceptions were so dim as hardly to discern God at all, not daring to speak his name, they were conscious of the presence of a Power above, and not within themselves, "which makes for righteousness." And when this power disclosed itself his message was, "I am a just and righteous God, and I require man to be righteous and just." The law of human righteousness sprang from the divine righteousness. Man is required to be pure and good, because God is pure and holy. His pattern and example

are from above. Almost the entire purpose of the spiritual part of the Old Testament is to so reveal the righteous and beneficent character of God, as to win the Hebrews to himself as a "peculiar people zealous of good works." He was their righteous Judge, Lawgiver and Father. He could but do what was right.

Conceding this, there are many passages of scripture which speak of the anger, vengeance, and vacillation of God, of his commands to go to war, to slaughter captives, to despoil their enemies,—commands in perfect accord with the spirit of the times, but inconsistent with the character of a righteous and holy God.

Learned men of the Church have found warrant in the letter of scripture, both Old Testament and New, for doctrines concerning God's dealings with men both in this world and in the next, which render him heartlessly unfeeling and cruel. Were these doctrines actually taught in the scriptures, they would be in conflict with their leading thought, viz. that God is a righteous and holy God. How then are we to interpret those passages? Shall we bend the leading thought and purpose of the Bible to an inferior and less worthy thought? Or shall the lower yield to the higher? Manifestly the latter. Let God be true, though all his servants shall be found false. We would not reject any portion of the Bible, but calling to our aid criticism, the knowledge of local custom, modes



of expression, the union of the human with the divine element in all revelation, we shall find sufficient data to justify us in maintaining the harmony and consistency of the word, with the character of God, and with itself. It is all true, but not all on the same spiritual elevation. Comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and carnal with carnal, there is no conflict of statement. God cannot contradict himself. That only is his word exclusively, which is in perfect harmony with himself. Our standard of exegesis carries us higher than our own thoughts and ways, to the consistency of the record of his thoughts and ways.

2. The interpretation of scripture must be consistent with God's character. We know his character by what he says of himself and by its reflection in ourselves. "Our whole nature leads us to ascribe all moral perfection to God and to deny all imperfection in him. And this will for ever be a practical proof of his moral character, to such as will consider what a practical proof is, because it is the voice of God speaking to us," says Butler. He is the supreme good, the perfect One, altogether lovely. "He doeth good," says the Psalmist. He does not rest his character wholly on his assertion, but points to his works, his providence, his care for all. "He is gracious and full of compassion ; he is holy in all his works." Every inspired writer bears testimony to the high and beneficent

character of God. He is Love, and loves all his children. These propositions are generally, nay, we may say universally conceded. If then the Bible is his word, it cannot teach any thing which is inconsistent with the above concession. Every divine attribute, purpose, and expression, must harmonize with it. To accept any doctrine purporting to come from scripture as true, which characterized him otherwise, would be contradictory and therefore false.

Nor can there be any antagonism in the various attributes which compose the Divine Nature. No claim for justice can conflict with the office and exercise of love. He is just, because he is good; "merciful because he rendereth to every man according to his deeds." It would be unjust to remit the penalty of sin, or to forgive those who do not deserve, and would not profit by forgiveness. He is just in rewarding the righteous, and punishing the guilty. Retribution is as much the requirement of love, as of justice. The perfection of the Divine character is the key to the right understanding of all his judicial and punitive dealings with mankind.

Now, if there are any passages of scripture which seem to teach that God is vindictive, punishing to gratify his own feelings, or to sustain the majesty of his own law, rather than for the correction and benefit of man, this apparent meaning is not the true meaning, because it conflicts with the character of God, and the purpose of

his moral government. Such passages, if there are any, are either faulty in translation, or else partake too largely of the mind and feeling of the writer.

The latter is never the case, however, where the spiritual judgments of God are applied to men ; but sometimes in the ministration of temporal retribution, the feeling and conduct of God are described in terms of passion and harshness comporting more nearly with the character of man, than with that of the serene majesty and holy feeling of the Divine Father.

But it may be objected that such a rule of exegesis determines *a priori* what scripture ought to teach, rather than what it actually does teach. We are to determine what Scripture is by criticism, and what it teaches by interpretation and comparison. The scholarship of the Church at the present time, as never before, is directed to the purification of the sacred text, and a correct translation of the same, into modern tongues. And it is a remarkable fact that this critical and literary ability is giving us a text and translation in perfect accord with the righteous and merciful character of God. Words and phrases on which important theological doctrines have been built up and sustained, are left out, or so modified in meaning as not to impugn the Divine goodness. The meanings which men have worked into the letter of scripture, are withdrawn, and the meanings of God and Christ

are permitted to shine with unobstructed clearness. New and broader rules of exegesis are applied, and the crystal stream of truth from the divine fountain is clarifying the verbal channels and human conceptions, by which the truth must reach the mind and heart of man. In the light of unlimited grace, and the divine perfection, scholarly criticism eliminates from the Bible the words "damnation," "hell," "everlasting punishment," "sacrificial atonement" and the popular meanings they have borne, leaving nothing in the letter that can mislead the reader, or reflect upon the character and government of the Almighty.

3. The Scriptures must be interpreted according to reason, and the moral intuition of man. These are fundamental attributes of human nature. They were given of God, before the Bible was written, and revelation to reach and affect man, must be in harmony with his nature. He has a right to reject any message, whatever its pretension, which conflicts with right reason and his moral sense. Leigh Hunt, in his autobiography, expresses a healthy sentiment, when he says, "If an angel were to tell me to believe in eternal punishment, I would not do it; for it would better become me to believe the angel a delusion, than God monstrous; and we make him monstrous when we make him the author of eternal punishment. For God's sake let us have piety enough to believe him better." And Bishop Butler says, "Reason is the only faculty whereby

we have to judge of any thing, even of revelation itself." If then any doctrine taught in the name of revelation conflicts with reason and moral intuition, the presumption is that it is no part of the revelation of God. If the doctrines of Christianity are a proof of its divine authority, as Butler claims, the presence of the doctrine of endless punishment in Christianity, would prove either that Christianity is not divine, or else that the doctrine is not found in the Gospel. Reason and intuition tell us that the doctrine of endless punishment is inconsistent with the character of a just and good God, and therefore cannot be a part of his word.¹ Dr. John Young, author of *Creator and Creation*, a work commended for its profound and just reasoning by the late Sir Wm. Hamilton, says: "On one point it is impossible to feel the least hesitation; eternal punishment in the sense of conscious suffering, even in a single instance, is inconceivable and unendurable by any sound and sane conscience." And then, to meet the theory that the sinful soul hereafter may be doomed to a state of all but unconscious stupor, and moral death, he continues, "With great reverence I venture to express the conviction, that if the Great Being foreknew that even this eternal torpor, but much more that eternal misery, conscious suffering, would be the doom even of a single creature, it is incredible that He should have given existence to that

¹ *Contemporary Review*, April, 1878.

creature." It may be said that reason is carnal and the moral sense perverted, and that therefore they are not a safe guide to follow in the interpretation of the word of Infinite Holiness. But in reply, if we admit the utter perversion of reason and the moral sense by sin, we destroy the utility of any revelation from God, or the possibility of any spiritual communication with him. An unmoral being could not know or understand God. A totally wicked and perverse nature would be in the same condition. Hence we contend that man never loses the use of reason and moral judgment. And besides we notice that it is those whose reason has been cultivated to the highest degree and whose moral natures have been regenerated by piety, that are the most sensitive and clear in their condemnation of those theological dogmas which outrage the higher nature of man. It is not the worst, but the best men, who are the quickest to see the inconsistency of endless torment with the divine character and human reason. The poet Whittier says —

" Nothing can be good in Him
Which evil is in me.
The wrong that pains my soul below,
I dare not throne above ;
I know not of His hate — I know
His goodness and His love."

We cannot believe that God says or does any thing which our reason and moral intuition tell us he ought not to do and say.

Nor can man really love and worship a being whose character and laws are contrary to his sense of right and his ideas of loveliness. He may, by force of education, believe in, and fear such a being, but he will not love him. He may not have the courage to say with John Stuart Mill, "that if God will send him to hell for not loving a Being many of whose traits are unlovely and abhorrent to his soul, then to hell he will go," nevertheless this expresses the feeling of every one of sound moral sense. It is not the province of reason and conscience to decide what ought to be, or what God ought to say and do, but it is their province to examine and decide as to the true and the untrue. Man is urged to come and "reason together with God;" "and to taste and see that the Lord is good." How could he do these, unless reason and moral sense are supreme within him? God claims to do only what is right in man's sense of right. Hence the true interpretation of scripture must yield a result, consistent with his higher nature.

With these fundamental principles of exegesis firmly fixed in the mind,—viz, that God's word must be consistent with itself; with his own character; and with moral intuition,—there can be no insuperable difficulty in determining what revelation teaches. We have the key to the meaning

of the judicial and punitive portions of his word, and are able to detect every blemish of theological bias and literary error in the translation. We are able to test the truth of doctrines taught in the name of revelation. We can "try every spirit, whether they are of God." Our battery sweeps the whole field. We no longer grope our way in darkness and uncertainty, ever asking "what is truth," meeting with no sure and satisfying response, but we have the principles of certitude within our grasp. It brings every question of doctrine before the high court of reason and conscience. When told by the sacrificialist that without the atoning blood of Christ to rescue men from the dreadful doom of endless woe, there could be no cause of joy and gratitude on the part of the saved, in the words of Martineau we reply, — "If to rescue men from a dreadful fate in the future be a just title to our reverence and love, *never to have designed that fate*, claims an affection yet more devoted; if there be a divine mercy in annihilating an awful curse, in shedding only blessing there is surely a diviner still." A correct knowledge of the character of God destroys the supposed contingency on which an unreasonable doctrine is made to rest.

It has long been the habit, we may say the misfortune of orthodox interpreters, to adopt that view of those texts of scripture that treat of retribution, which makes God the worst being in the universe. He brings myriads of human


beings into existence, knowing before he created them the absolute certainty of their doom to endless loss and pain. He was under no compulsion to give them life. They receive no compensation in this brief world for the unending woes beyond. If they *could* avoid their fate, He knew they would not. It would be infinitely better never to have been born. No sophistry of argument can convince a reasonable being, that it is right and beneficent to create immortal souls under such circumstances. The best minds among them confess that the conduct of God is dark and inexplicable. Even Calvin said it was "horrible." It repels all love and confidence. And yet Orthodoxy denies every broad and generous canon of biblical exegesis, and insists upon an interpretation so narrow and unjust as to render the Bible repulsive, and to crush out religion itself, did it not originate in a source too high and divine to be affected by the creeds and superstitions published in its name. Christianity cannot be impaired ; but its credibility is weakened by the false doctrines attributed to it. These have repelled thousands from the church, and reared a wall of partition between liberal scientific thought and the popular demands of faith. Christians must adopt a higher and more catholic exegesis, if they would avoid divisions and win the loyalty of large-minded men who are able to trace the ways and goodness of God in his works. It is complained that philosophers

and scientists are infidels. But generally it will be found on inquiry, that they do not reject the religion of God and Christ, but the interpretation of that religion, maintained by the narrower sects. On the essentials of religion there should be unity of faith, then the full force of revelation could be hurled against indifference and unbelief. This is a matter that concerns not Universalists alone, but all other sects as much. The Bible loses in authority as the various doctrines drawn from it neutralize and destroy each other. It is a house divided against itself, not by any intrinsic division of its own, but by the unwise and erroneous interpretations put upon it by its friends. The defenders and believers in revelation owe it to themselves, as well as to the cause they represent, to throw aside tradition and prejudice, and to come together and adopt a science of interpretation that shall eliminate error and bring forth the truth. They are not fit for the defence of the Word, if they cannot see the meaning and purpose of God in it.

Universalists by no means claim that they are the only ones who bring conscience and reason to bear upon the interpretation of scripture. They are not the only ones who are anxious to have the truth known. There are good, sincere men in other sects, who believe they are defending the truth of God, in upholding doctrines which our reason and moral sense tell us are wrong, and contrary to his

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character. They think they find a warrant for them in the letter of scripture. All we have to complain of is, that they allow the force of early education and sectarian fealty to blind their minds to the new and brighter light shed upon the sacred page since the day of Calvin and Edwards ; and to the urgent duty of a re-examination of the question as to what is taught in the Scriptures. There is an appearance of blind obstinacy, not only in defending exploded and outgrown dogmas, but in seeking new grounds of defence for what the honor of God, and the glory of his church, require to be given up. It would be more in keeping likewise with personal integrity when some of these old doctrines are abandoned ; such as " infant damnation," " total depravity," " election " and " predestination," to own the mistakes of the past, and thank God for the new light which has led to a milder and better faith, than to deny the past, and claim the labors of others as their own. In the great changes of modern theological opinion now going on, many of them coming completely up to our line of advance, and others very nearly, we fail to discover scarcely a hint of indebtedness to the labors and courage of those who have borne the heat and burden of the controversy that compelled this theological change of base for the better. However, we are content, only that truth advances and men are blessed. It is sufficiently gratifying to Universalists to



see good and learned men of other churches adopting their principles of exegesis, and coming to their conclusions as to the character of God, the nature of salvation, the purpose and limit of retribution, the mission of Christ, and the relation man will sustain to God in the future. We can ask for no more cheering signs of progress in this direction than we are meeting with of late.

But our duty is clear; and that is to continue in the future as in the past, to defend the Bible and the Gospel against the harm and reproach brought upon them by their professed friends. There can be no effectual opposition urged against a reasonable, humane, and practical religion, bringing the love of God to man, and causing the love of man to flow out to his fellow-man. In teaching people to, "*think noble things of God*," we are bringing the kingdom of God on earth, making man more noble, and consequently better and happier.

A correct exegesis of the Bible lifts it above popular objections, increases faith in its consolations and proffered helps. It reveals God as the loving, ever-present, sustaining Spirit, seeking to save, and never leaving, nor forsaking his children. He is no longer a distant monarch, guarding his throne "caring more for his law, than for his own Son, or the happiness of a universe of souls," ruling his domain, as an earthly despot rules a kingdom, but he is a loving, compassionate Friend, imposing his law of right-

eousness and duty, not for his own, but for man's good. His religion is given for this world, to save and bless man now and here. Right views of God and his word lift every cloud of darkness and dread from the soul, and crown man's existence with a priceless value, giving him the glorious life that now is, and an "inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven."

THE RELATION OF THIS LIFE TO
THE NEXT.

BY JOHN COLEMAN ADAMS.

THE belief in immortality essentially modifies the view we take of this present life, and of the consequences of conduct and of character. Most of our convictions about duty and destiny show new relations in the light of the faith that the soul lives after the body is dead. Ethics takes a new vantage ground. Religion presents new motives. And even science finds her results harmonized and crowned with inspiring hopes, if the soul is conceived to be an imperishable force. It makes great difference in our views of this life, whether we believe it to be connected with the future as a period of trial, of preparation, or of spiritual infancy; or whether we believe the two to be wholly unconnected, save as different states of one substance. And since much of the meaning which we attach to the future grows out of our conception of the present, we may properly begin at this point to discuss the relation of the present life to the next.

Universalism holds the present life to be the initial state of a moral order, whose progressive stages are to

be endless. The doctrine of the soul's immortality carries the implication of a thread of unity, running through all life and experience, and linking to each other all the stages of the soul's development. The life we lead at any point in our history, is a part of one organic whole. The persistence of personal identity binds the events of our lives in a mutual dependence upon each other, and relation to itself; and immortality perpetuates this relation. The conscious spirit holds the past life in relations to the present. It will be the bond between the present and the future life. From the earliest moment of separate existence, there is an indivisible unity in the experiences of a human soul. The past grows into the present; the present has its influence on the future. The life, at any period is related in both directions, backward, as an effect, and forward as a cause. Every act in the soul's life is definitely related to character, and modifies the course of destiny. The idle word for which we must give account in the judgment (Matt. xii. 36); the least things, in which we are commanded to be faithful (Luke xvi. 10); as well as the offences which are like millstones about the neck (Matt. xviii. 6), — are parts of one organic whole. The life of the soul is one life, here and hereafter. The same unity which runs through the life of the individual is manifest in the laws under which that life develops. Science has rendered theism a great

service in demonstrating the unity of nature. It has taught us the oneness of the universe, and the inseparable connection of all its parts. We know, in regard to matter, that the laws of its structure and changes have never altered. They are the same to-day as when light first broke upon chaos. They are one in Jupiter and Arcturus, and the formulæ which we work out upon our earthly blackboards discover for us a new planet on the confines of the solar system. We may affirm the same to be true of the moral system of things. There is one moral law for all worlds, because there is one Divine Nature, one Supreme Will. The principles of God's reign are neither transient nor variable. In all times and places, his law expresses his nature. Since that cannot change, the fundamentals of the moral law cannot alter. Moral distinctions are therefore unalterable. And so is the soul's relation to this law (Ps. xxxiii. 11; Jas. i. 17). So it must be true that the moral law is one in its fundamentals, and that it will everywhere be administered upon the same principles.

Since, therefore, the life of the soul and the nature of the system under which that life develops, exhibit a constant unity, we affirm that the present life is the first step in an eternal march. It is the soil in which the soul roots itself for an eternal growth. It is the primary grade in an eternal spiritual education. The grand law of

progress, whose workings in the past have been unfolded to us by modern science, is the law of all life, spiritual as well as physical; and Universalism holds that the admission of this law as the universal method of God, in connection with the belief in the soul's immortality, establishes, by implication, the fact that this life is the prelude to a nobler condition yet to come. The beginnings of the soul here will there be carried on to greater things. The germination of the spirit here will be succeeded by an unfolding, in the future, into more abundant life. That is the tenor of the New Testament, as it is the inference from philosophy. Jesus Christ and his apostles both taught this truth. We are not to look upon this life as final, but are to anticipate a more satisfactory condition hereafter (Heb. xiii. 14). In this life we enjoy only the feeble beginnings of that insight and spiritual capacity which will be ours when we see face to face (1 Cor. xiii. 12). The present is a period of preparation, in which the soul is fitted for its disembodied existence (John xiv. 2, 3). It is the imperfect, the chrysalis condition, which precedes a more glorious and complete existence. This is the epoch of life when we learn the tangible and material; but that is an epoch when we are to know the untrammelled powers of the spirit (Rom. viii. 18). This is the state of unharmonious moral relations, discordant natures, opposing tendencies. But the future is the con-

dition of settled dispositions, steadily unfolding powers, and spirits reconciled, harmonious, peaceful (Rom. viii. 21 ; Rev. xxi. 4). This life, indeed, is but the short camp of a night, the bivouac of the soul on its march to the confines of the immortal country. "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

In one sense, then, we may say that *the present life is a probation*. It is the gradual change from state to state, and, being a progressive development, involves the condition of trial and ascertained fitness as a preliminary to advancement. Life is a perpetual apprenticeship, in which to-day helps determine what to-morrow shall be, and fidelity is the measure of reward. In this school no man is promoted until he has fulfilled all requirements. He takes his rank from what he is. His condition and character are the product of all his past life. Failure and fault subtract so much from the sum-totals of character. Holiness raises the soul to the higher grades. We represent in ourselves, at any given moment, exactly the value of the experiences we have passed through, so that if the past has been a season of sinfulness and of short-coming, the present will be one of narrowed enjoyments and reduced capacities ; if it has been profitably used, our souls are the larger and the further along in spiritual growth. Every stage of life, therefore, is probational, so far as it proves our fitness for spiritual pro-

motion, or exposes our deficiencies and our inabilities. We must deserve, or we do not receive. We reap only what we sow, and every moment of our lives is the proof of what our past has been, as well as a condition which will help determine the future.

The unity of individual life, as well as of the moral law in this and all worlds, warrants the belief that this link binds the present to the future life. We are in training here for activity there. Our fitness depends on our faithfulness. If we have learned the elements of grace and holy living in this life, we are fitted for advancement in that other. If we have neglected our opportunities here, if we have been careless or rebellious pupils, we must take a lower place there, and perfect ourselves in the rudiments. Until we do, we get no promotion; for it is one of the rules of this school of life, that no man can expect to have elevated experiences until his soul is fitted for them. Here and hereafter, we shall be advanced in knowledge and in happiness only according to our qualifications. And we must believe that the beginnings of the future life are shaped by what has been done in this life. A soul takes into the next world what it carries out of this. Character cannot be dropped like the body. It is the self which we carry with us; and if the present life has dwarfed that self by neglect, or weakened it by abuse, or corrupted it by sin, then dwarfed, and weakened,

and corrupt, it must enter the future life. So far as this life, then, is a manifestation of fitness, so far it is a probation. So far as every stage of life is a preparation for succeeding ones, so far this life determines the plane on which we shall begin the next.

But *we are not to consider this life as determining the final destiny of the soul*, nor regard it as a period of suspended judgment, whose purpose is merely to test the qualities of the spirit before it is judged worthy of an endless heaven or fit for an endless hell. It is greatly exaggerating the meaning and importance of this life to conceive that its short opportunities are to decide the destiny of eternal years. It were a singular travesty upon the divine justice, to hang man's everlasting fate upon the blind decision of his infancy and ignorance. Yet this is exactly what we must do, if the moral choice we make in this life decides finally all our future. This is the stage of life in which we are least alive to the enormity of evil, or the attractiveness of good. This is a tentative period, in which we grope after our good, hampered by ignorance, fear, and passion, uncertain of many of the things which are most powerful as motives, very poorly prepared to make a final decision between good and evil. In this life, moreover, we have but just begun to feel the traction of divine grace, which is surely, steadily, though with the deliberateness of a power which

has no lack of time, drawing souls to a higher life. Now, is it possible to believe that divine love would hinge the eternal fate of a moral being upon the impulsive and unenlightened decisions of a will and judgment only in their infancy? Human existence, by such a theory, would be the unfairest of struggles. For if souls are put here to decide finally their future fate, they ought to do so with every possible advantage. When the stake is so awful, no man ought to be handicapped in the race. But we are by no means evenly started in this life ; and if there be no opportunity for improvement or change of character after death, then the doom of rejection would fall most frequently upon the morally unfortunate. For by far the larger number of those who become confirmed sinners in this life are those who inherit evil dispositions, or whose surroundings are, and always have been, evil. The moral accountability of man is qualified in a thousand ways,—by his predispositions, by his surroundings, by his ignorance, by his involuntary susceptibilities. And often those who do the worst are the most excusable. But unless we all start alike, and are accountable without any qualification for our moral status at the close of this life, it were a poor imitation of justice to make our characters then fix our fate finally. If this life is a probation, in the popular sense, then the heathen, dying in sin, on the Pacific Islands or in North Street alleys are practi-

cally doomed for ever. Those who confessedly have the poorest chance in this life have none at all in the next. Those whom Providence allows to come into this world loaded with the misdoings of past generations, that same Providence allows to be doomed by their involuntary tendencies to unending misery! This is equivalent to the worst form of fatalism. It is the doctrine of reprobation, in its most offensive guise. It puts man between the millstones of inherited tendency and corrupt surroundings, and ensures the moral death of three quarters of our race.

While, then, we by no means admit that death closes the account of God with the soul, or terminates its chances of moral recovery, we do assert that conduct in this life determines the moral condition in which we shall begin the next. Let us next inquire what are the respective effects of righteousness and of sin in this life, which decide the beginnings of life hereafter, and how the conditions of the future may be expected to modify the character formed here.

The effect of holiness upon the human soul is to increase its capacities and heighten its joys. Harmony with God, the doing of his will, love of righteousness, are uniformly spoken of in the New Testament as "life," "eternal life," life that "abideth for ever" (John xvii. 3; v. 24; 1 John ii. 17). The effect of right conduct, con-

sidered of course as the expression of a good heart, is to enlarge the powers of the human soul. Under natural laws of the spirit, exercise in godliness increases all godly traits. These traits become character in us. And when we leave the body in which we have been dwelling while we acquired them, they will go with us.

On the other hand, the effect of sin upon the soul is narrowing and corrupting. By contact with evil, we reduce the moral force of our natures, cut off the sources of pure enjoyment, and diminish our capacities for spiritual peace and pleasure. Just as a disease affects the body, so sin affects the soul. It cripples the will. It dwarfs the affections. It taints the thought. A man is less a man by being a sinner. His life is worldly, identified with the outward, bound up in the body. His whole nature, so to speak, is thrown out of gear. The equilibrium between the faculties is lost. And as a matter of course, there is no peace for the soul which is thus deranged by sinfulness. Inward joy comes only of inward harmony. It can never exist while the soul is divided against itself, rent by passion, and shaken by the strife between self-love and duty. So that the inevitable consequence of sin is misery. An evil heart is narrow, demoralized, and wretched. Like the results of righteousness, the consequences of sin are inward effects. They are organic in the soul. They may have been produced

by the acts of the body. They may have come of suggestions of the flesh. But they have become spiritual facts, and even if we suppose their cause removed, and the soul to be free from the body, these effects have passed out of the limits of the physical man. The sin which may have begun as a carnal impulse, has jarred the whole nature into disorder, and ends by demoralizing the spirit.

We therefore get no adequate idea of sin if we regard it as essentially confined to the body, and this earthly life. Sin is not a physical infirmity, like blindness ; nor a morbid development of the appetites, like gluttony ; nor a temporary ascendancy of the flesh over a resisting will ; nor the stupefaction of the soul by the lust of the body. Sin is, essentially, the resistance which the soul makes to the divine order. And however suggested, under whatever temptation committed, by whatever outward circumstances facilitated, sin is in the last analysis, an inward fact. It is a moral derangement. It affects the very substance of the soul. It is not a mere shadow cast on the surface of the spirit by passing clouds of passion. It is a darkening of the waters by the infusions of evil. It is not merely the retardal of the soul's development, but a distortion of the inward nature, a diseased and deforming growth.

We are now at a point at which we may properly ask, in what way the separation of the soul from the body, in

the experience of death, may be expected to affect its moral status. We have clearly before us the nature of sin, as an immoral act of the will, which touches the substance of character. Is it not a natural inference that this moral derangement may, and in many cases does, outlast the connection of the soul with the body? We spend this life in forming character. Our sins confessedly affect this character. And character, moreover, is a fact which transcends mere physical causes. Upon such facts as these we build the belief that the life of this earth determines the beginnings of the life on which we enter at death. Whatever the soul *is*, at the close of this state of existence, that it must be, by all analogy, and by the inferences from the present life, when it enters the future state. If the will be perverse and the affections estranged from God; if the soul be darkened by hatred or disturbed by contending lusts; if the nature be scarred with the wounds of sin, or flushed with its burning fever; then these terms describe its condition as it passes the bourne of the grave. If we have overcome the evil of this world, and are pure in spirit, fervent in holy affections, tenderhearted, forgiving, and loyal to the truth, we enter the next life upon higher levels, and come into more immediate enjoyment of its blessings. But every soul enters the next life in a state which exactly represents its faithfulness or its unfaithfulness in this.

It seems probable, moreover, that the same methods of discipline and retribution will continue in the future as are employed here to restrain the sinful, and overthrow the defiant. The uniformity of God's moral government is our warrant for supposing that the means employed in this world to deter from sin, or to break down persistent evil by moral catastrophe continue beyond the dead-line of the body. He who is under the bondage of sin is equally under the bondage of punishment for sin. And if we enter the next life in our sins, we enter it also in certain danger of their penalties. If the resistance of the will to the eternal moral law alienates the heart from God up to and beyond the gates of Death, the eternal laws of moral compensation will inflict suffering as long as this alienation lasts. Until the will consents to the divine order, there is no deliverance from the thralldom of retribution. So that if any soul goes into the future unrepentant, we must believe that the progress of penalty and discipline goes on, at the same time that grace persuades and love invites, until the evil heart is overcome.

For it must be noticed how often the way for divine love is prepared by the complete overthrow of the selfish soul, the wreck of its purposes, and the downfall of its strength. Some men push their wickedness to such lengths that they are only to be checked by utter ruin. When they are crushed, they are for the first time ready

to rise. When they realize the completeness of the divine power, they are for the first time ready to obey it freely. Many a man must meet his Waterloo, and meditate upon his downfall in some moral St. Helena, before he is ready for the restorative work of divine grace. In the case, therefore, of the morally stubborn and callous, who go out of this world, defiant, reckless, wilful, it is impossible to avoid the inference that the overthrow which would have been a necessary part of their history here, if the whole work of salvation had been enacted before our eyes, will go on behind the veil. The desperado who "dies game," as well as the selfish worldling who goes hence with a sneer at the tears of his friends, will be humbled and reduced by stern, punitive agents of divine law. The resistance of the divine order to their wilfulness, must continue until they learn that the Infinite Will is stronger than the finite. Then the time is ripe for the healing work of grace. If overthrow is necessary, it must be borne. If not here, then hereafter.

Let us add, at this point, that the belief in the future punishment of sins is strengthened by the fact that this life affords so many instances of what may be called *cumulative* punishment. All the consequences of sin are not coincident with its commission. Some of them are frequently held back, gather but slowly, and befall the soul long after the beginnings of the sin which caused them.

They are often kept in the leash, as it were, until the providential moment when their stroke will be most sweeping. The harvest of evil-doing is often a long time in ripening; and the sickle is not put in until the full time is come. The defaulter goes for years undetected. The adulterer may cover his tracks through many seasons. The hypocrite often keeps up the show of virtue so well that the world calls him saint. But after long immunity the tardy blow may fall in a way to bring down all the retributions at once. The calm and quiet days may be succeeded by a very cyclone of vengeance. Then comes the devastation of the good name, the blight of brilliant laurels, the wreck of influence and reputation. Then is the burning of the tares. In these crises of life, evil breaks down and is exposed. They are natural culminations of wrong-doing. And in cases where death intervenes before the climax of the overthrow is reached, and when we feel sure that nothing but the removal of the offender from the earth has saved him from complete exposure and humiliation, who can repress the question whether death has interrupted the steady drift of events, or whether, in the invisible world, there be not in store, the same judgment of disclosure and downfall, the mortification of pride and the conquest of the stubborn will, as might have overtaken the evil-doer had he continued in the earth. It is true, to use words familiar in discus-

sions of this matter, that we "get our punishment as we go along." But sometimes only in part. There are reckoning times of God, when delayed judgments fall, as they fell on Jerusalem, on Rome, and on slaveholding America. There are many cases in which our minds find no satisfaction for the sense of justice, save in the thought, that haughty sin, which holds its head so high in this world, will in the next, be brought low in the dust, under the culminating judgments of God.

If now we turn from the case of the impenitent, to that of the penitent dead, Universalism affirms that even they may expect such discipline and chastening experiences as contribute to moral progress. Though we go into the next life with humble, contrite hearts, we still have wrong tendencies which need restraint, imperfections to be corrected, and deficient affections to be developed. Now, whatsoever means God takes to remove these defects are remedial and disciplinary. They are like the means by which a dull scholar is urged forward. They are like the exercise which a physician prescribes for his patient. They hurt, but they help. All the efforts of souls but little trained in virtue may be of this nature, in the other life. We are not permitted to know. Revelation is silent upon this topic. But it seems no more than rational to suppose that the same plan by which God has seen fit to educate us into holiness in this life, should hold

over into the next. And according to the most ancient order of the moral creation, the sanctification of the soul is accomplished by discipline and correction. Whatever remedial or educational influences are necessary to our growth in that life, it may be expected, will exercise even those who have learned the lesson of resignation and submissiveness. If we believe in eternal progress we must believe in the disciplines by which progress is secured. But these are very different from punishment, which involves alienation from God, moral retributive suffering, and the agencies of pain, employed to restrain or overwhelm the sinful heart. The former are entirely compatible with happiness and moral peace, but the latter are not. And while discipline will be needful for all who enter the next world, as beings morally deficient, punishment will only be inflicted so far as old courses of sin have not yet worked out their results of penalty, or so far as a continuous disposition to wrong-doing calls for retribution. But when penitence has done its saving work, however low down in the scale of moral being it finds the soul, these penalties will cease, and the chastisements of God will only exercise the soul as helpful restorative discipline.

If we have not referred before to the helpful conditions which will make the future life by its very nature a redemptive state, it certainly is not because this thought is

of slight importance. Universalism regards the next life as a condition full of hope and promise to sinful souls. For then they begin an existence in which many of the surroundings which in this life have made sin easy, and even have proved temptations to evil, will be abolished. The body, though not the seat of sin, is a fruitful source of temptations, and a provocation to many of the grossest and most degraded acts of the mind. Many times, no doubt, the will consents to sin only from the force of overpowering passions of the body. In a condition, therefore, in which these are removed, the soul will have a fuller opportunity to redeem itself and to break from the bondage to evil. The inebriate will be better able to overcome his sinful dispositions, if he is no longer hampered by the diseased appetites of his body. The libertine will be free from the foul allurements which have corrupted his nature. And whatever pressure has rested on the soul, cramping its powers and repressing its aspirations by the carnal desires which belong to its earthly environment, will be removed with the dissolution of the body. This will be a great gain to the soul, — a negative gain, no doubt, — merely the removal of unfavorable surroundings. But nevertheless it will be a gain. It will be like the transfer of a sick man from a hurtful to a salubrious climate. The change does not cure him, but it puts him in surroundings which will.

Death does not save the soul, but removes it to surroundings incalculably more favorable to the work of grace than those of this earth. The voices of the heart which plead for righteousness will no longer be drowned by the noisy clamors of appetite. The evil inclinations of the mind will no longer be strengthened by the morbid cravings of the flesh. The suggestive and tempting surroundings which have so often excited the soul to transgression will have disappeared. The ignorance which concealed many a reality which might have warned or persuaded the mind to avoid the evil it meditated, will give place to clearer revelations of the truth, and more powerful motives. Three things which are a heavy weight on the soul in its battle with evil, we shall leave behind us. We shall be free from the physical body, with all its tendencies to overcome the spirit with carnal practices. We shall be clear of the surroundings of the body, the earthly environment, which contains so much to distract the moral energies, and which thrusts its importunate demands between us and the ideals of conscience. And we shall be emancipated from much of that ignorance which now subtracts from the restraints and motives of the soul.

Moreover, if with this great change the soul passes into a realm where new surroundings impress the mind with the solemn reality of many things which had hitherto

seemed unreal, is it unreasonable to expect that great moral changes will be effected in the character? Under the stimulus of the release from old temptations, and the access of light such as may be confidently expected in that glorified state, why may we not look on the change from this life to the next as a passage from night to dawn, in which the dormant or down-trodden spiritual energies will wake and begin the labors of holiness! There is that in the very nature of this rising of the soul into a higher life which suggests a wonderful upheaval of the spirit, the overthrow of its old prejudices, the cracking of the hard shell of habit, and the exposure of the mind to dazzling moral light. Under such an experience who can doubt that the soul will be quickened most powerfully? Who can doubt that the process of redemption, even of the stubborn, will be wonderfully hastened, and that the future state itself will be one of the sublimest of God's agencies for the conversion of men!

ETERNAL LIFE.

BY PROF. C. H. LEONARD.

THE Gospels speak of two classes of persons, the "righteous" and the "unrighteous," the "blessed" and the "cursed." It is clear, also, that Jesus believed in "life eternal" for the righteous, the good; and in "punishment eternal" for the "unrighteous," the bad. And it is needless to say that all the methods of religion will be determined by the meaning we give to these words of the Saviour,—by the conception, that is, which we have of the states and consequences that these two sets of phrases describe.

It is the purpose of this paper to give what we conceive to be the true view of the two characters, and the two corresponding destinies, as those characters and destinies are portrayed in the Gospels, and especially in the sayings of Jesus. The inquiry will be: Who are the good, the "righteous," the "blessed;" who are the bad, the "unrighteous," the "cursed;" what precisely is meant by the "life eternal" which the good enjoy, and the "punishment eternal" which the bad suffer. On each

of these points we must, of course, be brief; and yet we hope to omit nothing which will be necessary to a clear understanding of the matter. Consider then:—

1. Who are the good, the "righteous"? We cannot do better than seek the answer in the Saviour's own words and illustrations. In the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, we read that those whom the Lord called good, the "righteous," did not know that they were so. He told them that, in giving food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, shelter to the houseless, clothing to the naked, comfort to the sick, they were doing the same things to him. This was what the "righteous" could not understand. "When saw we thee an-hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and visited thee?" The reply was: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." This must have seemed very simple to those who heard Jesus speak; and, how hard soever for them to believe that they were included among the number for whom so great an "inheritance" was "prepared," they could not have failed to understand that the "righteous" man is the man of righteous deeds, and just such homely deeds, too, as lie in the way of almost any one of us. Nor can we fail to see that in these solemn sentences which

announce the Divine judgments, the very heart of Mercy speaks as if it were ready to break for the sufferings of the world, — the most impressive fact of all being that the Saviour himself suffers with the humble poor, the hungry, the naked, the prisoner, and that they who, from a pure motive, try to help God's poor and suffering ones are, on that account, "righteous," "blessed." Besides, in this whole discourse, the most remarkable that ever fell from human lips, we have nothing like an enumeration of tests, — surely, nothing like what we are apt to hear to-day. It is wonderful that nothing is said about faith, pious trust, repentance, conversion, regeneration. Absolutely nothing is spoken of *here* but the every-day conduct of one who feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, visits the sick and the sinful; and we are forced to believe that the man of righteous deeds is the righteous man. The doctrine is in one plain text of that Apostle who knew best how to interpret the Master's words: "Little children, let no man deceive you. He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as God is righteous." At the risk of repetition, we have to say, then, that there can be no good life without good works. When, however, we say in the language of St. John, "He that doeth righteousness is righteous," we do not mean, of course, that such an one is without right thought and right feeling, that he is destitute of faith and love. We mean only that what a man thinks and feels

must be brought out in his actions, else the thought and the feeling will pass for ever away. Hence it was that Jesus laid stress upon conduct, "fruits." He perplexes us with no refinements of language. He talks of things that all persons can understand. It is assumed, in all his teaching, that the man of right and true life will be a man of faith and love ; for these are the very things that constitute the man, and make the action of the life right and true. But this is not the whole truth of Jesus. The faith and love will not stay in the soul where they do not prompt to deeds. Thought, feeling, religious spirit, will not live and grow until they begin to work outwardly. Righteous feeling does not make a righteous man. All that is pure and devout within a man must be invested with conduct, become a part of nature and history, before there can be any thing like righteousness. Just as the sorry feeling is not all of repentance ; just as that feeling must lead to amendment, to reformation, altered habits, so pious emotions are not all even of piety, — surely not all of righteousness. The emotion must break out into energy. The feeling within must become doing. The soul was made to bear fruit ; and it will not do to let it run to leaf. Nor must its vitality be headed back. It must go forth to fill every part of life, and to mature some best product. There is no other way for it to *be* righteous, but to *do* righteousness. Christ, therefore, puts deeds into the

foreground of requirement. "Do you want to be a good man? Do you want to live?" "Keep the commandments." "This do, and thou shalt live." "Ye are mine, if you do whatsoever I command you." Whenever sincerity goes to Jesus with the deepest question of the soul, he throws it at once upon actions. He says: What are you doing? What are the commandments? Are you keeping them? If you are, it is well. You are on the way to the best life. Do the work that is nearest at hand, and so continue to do, until, by rising stages of success, you reach a better and better state. And thus, in the very methods of righteousness, the Saviour recognizes its degrees, ranging from lower to higher. The question is not, Have you done all that a soul is called to do? but, Are you doing what you have the might to do? The question, again, is not, Have you reached the heights of God? but, Are you moving towards them? The "righteous" include all of right life, all on any range of existence, who are doing righteousness. Some, doubtless, are at the base of God's hill; the feet of many are upon the slopes; and others, we fain would hope, are nearing the summit.

2. After what has been said above, but little is required upon the next point: Who are the unrighteous? The question is virtually answered. If the "righteous" man is the man of righteous deeds, the "unrighteous" man is one who refuses, or neglects, to do righteous deeds.

Jesus, in the person of the poor, the suffering, the sinful, is not cared for ; and he still says, " Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these the least of God's lowly ones, ye did it not unto me." You have not done righteous deeds. To state the doctrine in another way : The unrighteous man is one whose thoughts, feelings, and conduct do not correspond. Or, if they correspond, the conduct is but the expression of a wrong inward state. The correspondence in this case is the fatal thing. In the case of a righteous man, the greatest glory is, that the inward and outward aspects of the life are accordant, — exactly correspond. The one assures and completes the other. Inward faith and love are the soul of deeds ; but deeds react, and become the one great method of the soul, giving it shape and permanence. In other words, character is not born until body is given to thought and feeling. When good thought and good feeling find investiture in action, we get good character. When bad thought and bad feeling mature in conduct, we get bad character. In each case what sets the seal to the life is conduct. Therefore the Gospel accents deeds. They are the salt that saves the life ; they alone give health, consistence, force, to what would else evaporate or decay. And this, in principle, must be as true of the one class as of the other, of the bad as well as the good. And it ought to be said of the latter class as of the former, that what fixes character

is not one act, nor two, nor twenty, but the habit of wrong thinking, feeling, and acting. The question in regard to any man is, Which way does his life sweep? No matter about the ripples on the top of the life ; at any rate, these are relatively unimportant, as compared with the current of the life. Is that flowing in the right direction? On the whole, prevailingly, that is, does the man move towards God, and all good objects? If so, he is a good man. If, on the other hand, the life sweeps the wrong way ; if, on the whole, the life is a descent towards the things that are opposed to God and goodness, that fact determines the character of the life. It is bad, and bad simply because it goes the bad way. Its whole movement, as determined by that within, which really constitutes the life, shows what it is. No chance deed, no single, sudden lapse, determines character, but what has the complexion and force of habit. The one good deed, the one action, though it come of good impulse, does not make a good man. It does not follow, that the man who is moved to extempore pity, and, out of that fresh feeling, gives largely to the poor, is necessarily, and on that account, a benevolent man. He may be a miser, for all that. Nor does it follow that a man is a bad man, in character bad, because he has been overtaken in a fault. What gives character to character is continuance in well or evil doing. Indeed, the original word from which we get our word charac-

ter, signifies to cut or carve as upon stone or other hard material. So character is the shape of the man as produced by the sharp incision of thought, the subtle handling of feeling, and the force of deeds. Character is the result of this mysterious wear of the inner and the outer life; and, of course, admits of degrees of excellence, and stages of deformity.

This, then, seems to be the New Testament idea of the good and the bad, the righteous and the wicked. These are the two characters. What now are the two destinies? These might be inferred from the two characters. There is a sense, indeed, if thought could only grasp the truth, in which character *is* destiny; because all questions of destiny may be resolved into questions of being. The question so often put, What is to become of us? is irrelevant and impertinent in the light of a true psychology; for character and destiny are inseparable, if not identical. The good man *is*, not is to be blest; and the bad man *is*, not is to be cursed. Good character does not so much promise, it constitutes the eternal life; and bad character is not so much threatened with "loss," "death." It is loss, it is death. What it is denied, or deprived of, is not so bad as its own state, just as loss of sight is worse than any thing which results from that loss. It is sad not to see the countenance of one's friends, and the blush of beauty on the face of nature, but it is

sadder to be blind. So, as the best thing you can say of a good man is, He is a good man ; so the worst thing you can say of a bad man is, He is a bad man. Nothing that comes of character can suggest so real or so complete an idea of destiny as the character itself, good or bad.

But we shall keep more closely to the method of this essay, if we inquire, first, as to the meaning of eternal life, which the good are said to enjoy, and of the eternal punishment, or, to preserve the antithesis, the eternal death, which the bad are said to suffer.

1. The eternal life. In attempting to define this phrase, or to describe the state which it points out, we cannot do better, perhaps, than to ask how it is used in the New Testament. And the moment we do consult Gospels and Epistles, we are surprised to see how frequently life is referred to as something different from existence, and different, too, from immortality itself. The one thing that men are called to is life ; the one thing that they are eager to secure is life ; and, more than any thing else, life is the final cause of all Christian training and discipline. We may not always understand the method of Christianity, but we can hardly fail to see that its crowning object is *life*. If it bring instruction for ignorance, pardon for penitence, salvation for sin, it is that the taught and the forgiven and the saved soul may be quickened, made alive with the life which it is its special office to impart.

It is wonderful, indeed, to note with what recurrence the Saviour speaks of life as the end beyond all others in the great work which he came to do. As we have just hinted, he came to bear witness to the truth, to tell men what they are, and where they are, and what, as souls, they are to do and be ; he came to fulfil the law, to complete all law in love, so that duty will be no more duty than pleasure ; he came to save the soul, not in the sense of rescuing it from a penal doom, but in the sense of emancipating it from all wrong. But he does not stop with this threefold work, great and glorious as it is. He goes on to complete it all in the communication of a life of which he is the perfect possessor, and the only communicator to men. He does every thing else for us that, at last, he may do this greater work in enlivening the souls which his truth has instructed and his salvation has blessed. Now, this life is called "eternal ;" and the first thing that we learn about it is, that it is a present possession. "He that believeth on the Son *hath* eternal life." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me *hath* eternal life." "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, *hath* eternal life." "Whosoever believeth in him (Christ) should not perish, but have eternal life." "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst ; but it shall be in him a fountain" — *πηγή* — "of water springing up into everlasting life." "He that heareth my word, and believeth on

Him that sent me, *hath* eternal life, and shall not come into condemnation, but *has passed* from death into life." These sayings, and many others which might be quoted, show that the eternal life of which Jesus speaks is a present possession of the human soul; that it *is*, — not *will be*. Meyer, whose "orthodoxy" will not be questioned, and whose learning places him in the front rank of New-Testament critics, says, in commenting upon several of the above passages, and especially upon the words ζωὴν αἰώνιον, that they "signify the eternal Messianic life, which the believer already possesses." "It is that moral and blessed life, which is independent of death." Lücke, also, whose opinions are eagerly sought by all students of exegesis, says that the ζωὴ αἰώνιος, the eternal life, is the "sum of Messianic blessedness," "an existing life," "a present reality" in the soul. He says over and over again that "hath" and "hath passed" indicate that the "life" spoken of is not a life after death, but one that begins here in this world, — a higher kind of life, "a resurrection process prior to bodily death." So much, then, ought to be plain, that the eternal life, however defined, is a present possession. It is what the believer in Christ *has*. He confides in him who is the life; and his mind and heart are fed out of the mind and heart of the *living* Lord and Redeemer.

But we do not reach the defining characteristic of the

eternal life by study of those texts alone which speak of it as a present possession. Indeed, the word *possession* is misleading. It may refer to what is external to the soul itself, when, in truth, it does refer, in this case, to what is inward and substantive. The soul does not possess the eternal life as it may be said to possess the objects of nature, the facts of history, and the experiences of men. The eternal life is not so much an object of contemplation as a fact of being. At any rate, it is so much a part of the soul that, though we may *think* of it as separate from being, it is inseparable from it. It is the soul's *life*, and therefore a fact of consciousness. The entire truth is stated in the words of Jesus : " This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." The most eminent teachers of the ancient church quoted this verse as Christ's own definition of the phrase, " eternal life ; " and the best modern biblical critics agree that it refers to a state of the soul itself. They teach that the " knowledge " of God and Christ is not a means of attaining the eternal life ; but that that " knowledge " is vital, and constitutes the eternal life. This " knowledge " of God and Christ, which comes of inward experience of the truth, and of the love of God in Christ, *is* the eternal life. The " knowledge " is the subjective, formative principle of the " life." It is its very germ, whose unfolding is possible in this world, amid the mortal hindrances, and whose fuller

development will appear hereafter, when all mortal concealments are taken away. This is the view taken by De Wette, Meyer, Olshausen, Tholuck, Bengel, Alford, and many other German and English commentators. They all accent that interpretation of the words of Jesus which makes eternal life a *state* of the soul. They all recognize a "spirit" in man, in all men, that is, which is the root of the eternal life. The life was with the Father from the beginning, was manifested in the Son, and is given to the soul by the Father through the Son. The eternal life, therefore, is the life of God in the soul, and of the soul in God. Fichte says, "Love is life. Where I love, I live. What I love, I live from that." And this is not only profound spiritual philosophy, but the deepest truth of revelation. St. Paul teaches us that we love earthly things because our life is earthly, and that love of heavenly things comes of heavenly life. If we love what is right and true and good, our life is spiritual, eternal. If we love lower things, earthly things, our life is earthly, temporal. If we love God as he is shown to us by Jesus, we live from God, and so live the eternal life. Eternity has really begun in that soul that is deepening into life from a pure love of right, and truth, and goodness.

If it were necessary to add any thing to what has already been said, to make clear that the eternal life is greater than mere duration, that it is a state of the soul, and a very

present, inward good, we might refer to those incidents and sayings of the Gospels which make it sure that this great life is something man can get by his own endeavors. When the young man asks Jesus what he shall do that he may have eternal life, the Master replies in such a way that the young man feels that he must do something to secure the great boon and blessing. If the questioner had been thinking of mere continuance of existence after the death of the body, Jesus would not have answered as he did. It is evident that he interpreted the question to mean : What shall I do that I may get the true life,—the inward, spiritual life? To do good, to help the poor, to keep the commandments, is the way to become a better man. This better life within is what the young man wanted, and Jesus spoke of the only way of getting it : by keeping the divine law, helping others, following him. In substance, this is what he said to Peter, also, when that disciple told his Lord that he and the others had left all to follow him. "There is no man that hath left the dearest treasures of this world, but shall receive a greater good ; and the greatest good which will accrue from all your denials is the eternal life, the deeper life of your mind and heart. Leave lower things and employments, and follow me in the higher life, and you will gain in truth, in purity, in love. The spiritual or inward life is compensation enough for all your denials and sacrifices." The

words of Jesus, then, rightly interpreted, show that the eternal life is something which we may secure by inward and outward work, — just such service, indeed, as will result in a fairer mind and richer heart. There would be little sense in calling us to right and true and loving action as preparation for endless existence. But such action is rightful preparation for the eternal life ; since that refers to the kind of life, and not primarily to the quantity or duration of it. We shall be confirmed in this view as we go on to consider what is presented in the New Testament as the natural antithesis of the eternal life.

2. The eternal punishment. We write *eternal* punishment, because it is conceded by scholars that the words “ everlasting ” and “ eternal ” stand, in the English version of the Scriptures as the equivalent of the Greek word *αἰώνιος*. In the passage so often quoted, — Matt. xxv. 46, — “ *κόλασιν αἰώνιον* ” and “ *ζωὴν αἰώνιον* ” are set forth as the opposite destinies of the righteous and the wicked. If we adopt into our language the word which Tennyson has made familiar, the saying of Jesus will read : “ These shall go away into ‘ æonian ’ punishment, but the righteous into ‘ æonian ’ life.” The adjective (æonian) means no more, no less, in the former case, when applied to punishment, than in the latter, when applied to life. Æonian life, as we have tried to show, is the life of God in the human soul. The quality, and not the quantity, of the life

is pointed out. Therefore, the æonian punishment is the kind of punishment, and not the duration of it. Grant, as some persons are eager to have us, that the Greek noun *αἰών* means *eternity*. The most we could say, even then, would be that *αἰώνιος* means *belonging to eternity*; and, of course, it would be just as fair to say that the æonian punishment is the punishment which takes place *in* eternity, as that it is punishment which lasts *through* eternity. Some critics, it may be, have been swift to deny that *αἰώνιος* has *any* reference to duration. Others have labored to show that the word signifies "endless," "for ever." By far the better class of scholars concede "that the adjective *αἰώνιος*, neither by itself, nor by what it derives from its noun, *αἰών*, gives any testimony to the endlessness of future punishment." The most that can be said is, that the punishment belongs to, or takes place in, the æon, or the æons, to come, — not in the eternity, or the eternities (which would be very incorrect) to come, but in the *age* or *ages* to come. Dr. Tayler Lewis, in his "Excursus on Ecclesiastes," i. 3, in Lange's Commentary, takes this view, and to him we refer the interested reader. He says that "the preacher, in contending with the Universalist, or Restorationist, would commit an error, and, it may be, suffer failure in his argument, should he lay the whole stress of it on the etymological, or historical significance of the words *αἰών*, *αἰώνιον*, and attempt to prove

that, of themselves, they carry the meaning of endless duration." In allusion to Matt. xxv. 46, he says: "There comes at last the end. Sentence is pronounced. The condemned go away *εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον*, the righteous *εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον*. Both states are expressed in language precisely parallel, and so presented that we cannot exegetically make any difference in the force and extent of the terms. *Αἰώνιος*, from its adjective form, may perhaps mean an existence, a duration, measured by æons, or worlds (he means *time*-worlds, and not worlds in space), just as our present world, or æon, is measured by years or centuries. But it would be more in accordance with the plainest etymological usage to give it simply the sense of *alam habba*, — the world to come. These shall go away into the punishment (the restraint, imprisonment) of the world to come, and these into the life of the world to come. That is all we can etymologically make of the word in the passage." The word *αἰών*, from which *αἰώνιος* derives all the meaning it has, is never used in the sense of endless. . In the Greek philosophers, in the Septuagint, and in the writings of the New Testament, it always means a period of time. The fact, too, that this word (*αἰών*) has a plural ought to convince us that *eternity* is no proper translation of it, for how could we speak of *the eternities*? Besides, the Scriptures use the phrase, *οὗτος ὁ αἰών* (this age), meaning only, as our translators have taught us, "this world," this age, this epoch. It surely, then, is

not a very bold thing to say that *αἰώνιος* means, and must mean, belonging to an age or dispensation, and that *αἰώνιος κόλασις* (æonian punishment) is the punishment that takes place in that age or dispensation. At any rate, we are not obliged to put the common idea of eternal into this pregnant word. To us the New Testament teaches that, as the good go into that spiritual life which is characteristic of the Christian æons, so the bad go into æonian punishment, or that punishment which marks the same æons. The good go into æonian, spiritual life, because they have "knowledge" of God and of Christ. They see God's truth and God's love, and are conscious of that in their own souls which is in harmony with that truth and love, and so they are at rest. The bad see the truth and the love of God and their own evil at the same time, and so are condemned. They suffer the æonian punishment, the spiritual death. And here we must guard against putting any meaning into the *αἰώνιος κόλασις* (eternal punishment) which the words themselves will not bear. The primary meaning of the word which Jesus uses (*κόλασις*), and which in the New Testament is rendered punishment, is "to prune." In this first use of the word, it implies that process by which trees are treated, that they may grow more vigorously, and, above all, bear better fruit. In its figurative use, as applied to the moral life, it means those methods by which character is improved, made vigorous and fruitful. It carries the meaning of correction, dis-

cipline. According to Aristotle, when the Greeks wanted to point out the "kind of punishment which is intended for the vindication of law and justice," they used, not *κόλασις* (the word used by Christ), but another word, *τιμωρία*, which indicates the vindictive character of punishment. So far, then, as the truth hinges upon the meaning of a word, the use of which by the Saviour could not have been accidental, he means a punishment which will result in the sinner's reformation. The wicked are judged by Christ's truth and Christ's love, and are thus made to see what and where they are ; and they go away from that invisible bar into the *αἰώνιον κόλασιν*, the æonian punishment, to suffer, indeed, we know not what hard, long discipline, but to suffer that they may be saved ; for the severest scourging upon impenitence is but the correction of Christ's loving wrath.

We might pause here, but for a single objection which has been accented in the current controversy on this subject. It is urged, with apparent conclusiveness, that since *αἰώνιος* "must mean as much for the wicked as for the righteous," and that since the æonian life means endless life, the æonian punishment must mean endless punishment. To this we reply, that, while it is true that "both states are expressed in language precisely parallel, and so presented that we cannot exegetically make any difference in the force and extent of the terms," it is by no means certain that "æonian life" denotes endless life. The idea

of duration is involved in the Greek adjective, *αἰώνιος*, but primarily it does not indicate the length of the life, but life of a certain kind. The severest textual criticism will not be able to justify the "quantitative interpretation," to the extent, we mean, of showing that the phrase æonian life means endless life. It shows rather that it is the life which *belongs* to the æon or æons. To repeat what we have elsewhere set down, the æonian life is the life which a good and true man *has*. "He that believeth on the Son *hath* æonian life." "This is the record, that God *hath given* unto us æonian life, and this life *is in his Son*. He that hath the Son *hath* life; and he that hath not the Son *hath not* life." "*This is* the æonian life, that they may *know thee*, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." These texts refer to the *kind* of life, and not to the duration of it; and it would seem that the perpetuity of the life is secondary to that vitality which characterizes it. So far, then, as any thing is to be inferred concerning æonian punishment, it is not endless. Primarily, it is the punishment which *belongs* to the æon, or æons. It is the quality of the punishment, and not the quantity of it. The true force of the æonian punishment is in its spirituality, and not in its endlessness; and the soul that is "eternally" separated from God is the one that is *inwardly* separated from Him, and so from blessedness and bliss. Moreover it would be difficult to show, on ethical grounds, that *any* suffering would accompany sin, if sin

were endless ; for such suffering is possible only when the soul has sight of some good, some virtue, which it desires. *Guilt* could never occur unless the soul became aware, conscious of a truth, a good, which it had wronged. Continuous sin would preclude such consciousness. Consciousness of sin, however, is a fact. Always when a soul *sins*, it knows that it sins, and that, too, in the light of what is opposite to sin. The sin, then, is broken in upon, is interrupted, by so much of good as the soul sees and knows, and in knowledge of which it is judged and condemned. Endless sin, therefore, would seem to be impossible to a moral being ; and if endless *sin* is impossible to such a being as man, it is hard to see on what grounds endless suffering is to be justified. The only idea that is admissible is the one which the New Testament teaches : that the sinner suffers æonian punishment, which is inward and spiritual, — a punishment which is occasioned by the sight of the good which judges him. The suffering, as we believe, is a means to an end, and that end is amendment leading to virtue ; and so on to recovery. This is the *ultimate* destiny for the “righteous” and the “wicked,” — for those who go into æonian life, and for those who go into æonian punishment. It is the end beyond all æons, and beyond all æons of æons. And the one consummation to which the discipline of all future but still intermediate ages conducts is universal redemption.

IMMORTAL LIFE.

BY A. J. PATTERSON, D.D.

LIFE is the cause and not the result of material organism. Particles of matter do not combine and create life by spontaneous generation. A life-principle touches matter, and weaving it into living tissue, clothes itself with material form. The child does not live because he grows, he grows because he lives. The body is not primal, and the spirit incidental. The soul is the real entity, and the body is a garment which the soul puts on. We recognize this truth even in the common language of life. We say my hand, my head, my body. It is not me : it is mine. No member of my body is me, nor are all the members combined. They are all mine. Now who am I, that possess this hand, this head, this body, all these material members, through which I come into connection with material things? I am a living, thinking, hoping, loving, and aspiring soul. "God is a spirit," and I am his child. I shall lay aside these earthly implements and garments by and by. But the change will not be death. It will rather be the morning dawn of real life.

But how can man live, self-conscious and active, without his material organs? How can he see without eyes, or hear without ears, or think, or feel, or love, when brain and heart are mouldering in the grave? The answer is not difficult to find. A little study of the human constitution reveals the fact that it is not the eye that sees, nor the ear that hears. Delicately constructed as are these organs of sense, they have no power of their own. They are only windows of the earthly house, through which the conscious soul within, holds converse with the outer world. If it can see so much of beauty and hear so much of melody through the narrow casement of its prison, shall it not have clearer vision and listen to diviner songs when its prison walls are broken down, and it stands with unveiled face in the presence of the excellent glory?

That man's conscious selfhood centres in his spirit rather than his body, is evident in the changes which come to the body during life, without affecting his identity. The man of gray hairs is the same conscious being that he was in childhood. Tracing his way step by step along the halls of memory, he finds that his identity remains unbroken. His body has changed again and again, in form and feature, and even in its constituent elements. Not a particle of matter remains, of which it was composed when he was ten years old. He has literally put off one body and put on another half a score of times. But he

has not lost identity. He has been the same conscious soul from first to last. If the soul, without shock, or check, or loss of conscious life, may pass from one material body to another, why may it not, with equal exemption from harm, pass from the material to the spiritual body, and enter the fair realm of spiritual existence?

Once more. It is well known that the loss of a limb does not in the slightest degree maim the soul. The self-conscious spirit remains in its integrity. Only the material form has suffered loss. Remove one limb after another, until only the vital part remains, and the man is still a man. His vote would go as far in deciding an election as that of his more fortunate neighbor. His prayer would be just as acceptable in the ear of Heaven. His powers of will, of thought, of feeling, of veneration, of devotion, may have suffered no abatement. He never felt himself more truly a citizen of the kingdom of heaven, an immortal child of God. Throw off the little that remains of that wasted body, and who can say that it shall reduce by the minutest fraction the stature of the soul.

It is a recognized law of science, that nothing which *is*, can absolutely cease to be. It may pass through numerous changes, combinations, modifications. But that something should become nothing, is impossible. You cannot reduce to nothing a grain of sand or a drop of dew. You may grind the sand to powder, and scatter it to the four

winds of heaven. Still it is something. The plant or earth may drink the dew, or it may be converted into vapor and wafted away on the wing of a cloud ; still it is something, and it has a place in the economy of things. By a law of the mental constitution, it is not possible even to conceive of its destruction. Much less can you formulate the idea of your own destruction. Your body may undergo great changes. It may be burned to ashes, or buried in the earth or sea, and return to its original elements. But no least particle of it is lost. It is carefully preserved by that God, who, in his miserly economy, has made nothing for destruction. Your soul also may undergo great changes. The limitations of thought do not necessitate the idea of its existence after death in the same mode or form that it exists to-day. But you cannot conceive of its absolute destruction. It is not a phenomenon, but an entity ; not a dream but a reality. And you can think of no change through which it may pass, in the eternity that holds you in its arms, in which you will not be concerned, and, in a sense, be consciously present to behold. Your continued existence therefore becomes a necessity ; for, by the limitations of thought, you cannot conceive of its absolute end, and it is a recognized law of metaphysics that what cannot be thought cannot be true.

The tenacity with which we cling to our identity affords another cogent argument for immortality. There is not a

man in the world, who, if the thing were possible, would drop his own conscious selfhood and assume that of another. You may be willing to change places with another. You may covet his wealth or wisdom, his beauty or talent, his honor or influence. But *you* would occupy his place. You would change places with him. You would not *be* him. The self-conscious *me* must go with you everywhere. The throne of God himself would be of little concern to me, if *I* were never to see its glory. Why was this instinct planted in the soul? Was it to tantalize us for a little while, as the cat or tiger toys with its victim, and then blot us out of existence? Is not this clinging to identity a prophecy of immortality, a pledge from God himself that we are born for an endless life?

And why "this pleasing hope, this fond desire, this longing after immortality," if we are limited to the narrow span of threescore years and ten? Philosophers tell us that "the universe is governed by attractions," and that "there can be no attraction toward nothing," but "wherever there is attraction, there is and must be an attracting object." They also tell us that "Correspondency is a law of the universe," that "provision has been made for every natural want," and that legitimate "desire and tendency are a sure index of destiny." This law is abundantly illustrated in the natural world. The houseplant turns its leaves and grows towards the window, seek-

ing sunlight. Sunlight has been provided to reward its quest. The vine sends out its clasping arms, seeking something to which it may cling. Branches extend above it their strong supporting arms. The germinating seed sends a root downward, seeking moisture. Moisture has been provided to nurture its life. It sends the blade upward, seeking air and sunlight. Air and sunlight are found to answer its demands. The migratory bird is drawn by a strange longing toward summer lakes and fruitful fields, far, far away. It does not make its journey over sea and land in vain. Man is hungry, and the earth teems with abundance. He is thirsty, and a spring is at his feet. He craves companionship, and beautiful beings are all about him to share his love and to return their own. There is no natural want, instinct, or longing, of vegetable, animal, or man, for which God has not made provision. Now apply the analogy to the subject under consideration. Man does desire an immortal life. There is no want or longing that is more natural or universal. What is the legitimate inference? That man shall live for ever. It cannot be that the good God, who has balanced want and supply throughout his universe, so carefully that there is no hunger of beast, bird, fish, or insect which cries in vain, will, when he comes to man, the noblest creature of all, impart a longing that is never satisfied, and that the highest and holiest longing of his nature. It may

be objected that there are wants of beast and man that cry in vain, that many an animal dies of hunger, that man has an intense desire for wealth, or fame, or position, that is never realized. It is not claimed that every outcropping of desire is, on the instant, answered. But it is claimed that there is that which would, if it could be obtained, answer every natural desire. Nor is it claimed that every peculiar form of want which man can know is ever to be satisfied. In our present perverted condition, there are desires that are not natural or legitimate, that ought to be and will be denied. But these are not fundamental intuitions, like the longing for immortal life. They spring from our peculiar surroundings, and may have their birth and death with them. This is a natural want of man, found under all conditions, and hence must have been provided for. "God does not create a desire to mock it. There are no dissonances in his works. The constitutional instincts raise no false expectations. The structure of the human constitution is not an organized lie."¹ Emerson has uttered no sublimer sentiment than when he says, "Every thing is prophetic, and man is to live hereafter. The implanting of a desire indicates that the gratification of that desire is in the constitution of the creature that feels it. The Creator keeps his word with us. All I have seen teaches

¹ Joseph Cook.

me to trust the Lord for all I have not seen.”¹ This argument is old as Cato, but it has lost none of its force by the repetitions of the ages.

This longing for immortal life is not a thing of cultivation merely. It is found in all nations and ages, in all grades and conditions of society. The polar Indian feels it in his hut of snow. The rude African feels it, sitting beneath his palm. The philosopher is stirred by it in his profoundest investigations. Job longed for a sure answer to the question, “If a man die, shall he live again?” The believing Christian finds his sweetest solace in the assurance, “He is not here, but is risen.” How shall we account for this almost universal expectation, except it be on the supposition that it was planted in the soul by the God who made the soul. It is a prophecy of destiny written not on parchment or tables of stone, but on the tables of the heart. “As the insect throws out its antennæ, and by their sensitive nerves, finds that which is beyond its sight, so man throws out the arms of intuition and aspiration, and touches that which is behind the veil.”

This prophetic voice, co-existent almost with the race, grows clearer and more distinct under the influence of cultivation. What was only a faint whisper in the ruder ages and nations, a longing which did not ripen into satisfying faith, beneath the light of Christian cultivation

¹ Essay on Immortality.

and scientific investigation, becomes a sonorous assurance, a sweet and satisfying song of trust and peace and praise. The wisest and best men, the men who have known most of nature and lived nearest God, the men who have stood and stand as beacon-lights, to show the succeeding generations how to honor God and gain the highest ends of life, are men who have shared, in largest measure, the faith of immortality.

And it is a significant fact, that this faith grows brighter and clearer as men near the border-land which separates faith and sight. Many a man whose faith was weak, when the pulses of life were high, has grown into it more and more, as the life-tide ebbed away, until, like Moses from Pisgah, he could see the "sweet fields beyond the swelling flood." Whatever one's doubts or speculations may have been in life, it is rare indeed for a sane man to confront death without believing in a life to come. This is what we should expect if immortal life be true. But if death were the end, and immortality a dream, we should expect to see men, all men, start back appalled, as the dream vanished, and they confronted annihilation.

Another evidence of immortality is found in the imperfect state of man on earth. We do not refer so much to the millions who enter life, and breathe the air for a few days or months and pass away, — little children that begin to unfold their possibilities, and are plucked before their

time ; nor to the millions who, living to mature years, die as children in knowledge ; nor to the millions, even more unfortunate, who are dwarfed and wasted by sin, — though it were passing strange if no further chance were given them to fulfil the purpose of their creation. We refer to all men, the wisest and best, as well as the weakest and meanest of our race. God gives the forest-tree time to mature. It grows at leisure, and fulfils the purpose of its life, and sinks perhaps into slow decay. The horse is satisfied with a comfortable stall and well-filled manger, or an abundant pasture. He has learned as much when seven years old, as he will ever know. He has no comprehensive plans for the welfare of his kind to leave unfinished, no intricate experiments pursued for years and years in the quest of truth, which, if he dies an hour too soon, may be as if they had never been. He has no unanswered longing for something yet to be. But where is the man who can say that his work is finished, that his plans are consummated, that his possibilities are fully ripe ? Newton, when dying, felt that he had only gathered, as it were, a few pebbles along the shore of an illimitable continent, that he had only touched the surf of an illimitable sea. Such is the experience of the greatest and best men who have lived or died. If the philosopher shall never finish the investigations from which he was summoned by the messenger of death ; if the poet shall never complete

the song that was cut short by his failing breath ; if the artist shall never realize the high ideal for which he perhaps starved in a dim attic, and worked on until he fainted at his tasks, and died with fame and fortune just within his reach ; if the Christian shall never meet that Saviour in whose name he marched through martyr fires ; if the poor child of sin, who failed in the stress of life, though longing for holiness with most intense desire, shall never stand clothed in white among the ransomed company, — then law is a lie, and life is a mockery, and man is the one stupendous failure in the universe. God gave this higher ideal than we can attain on earth, this hunger for knowledge, this longing for perfection. As God is God and cannot act a lie, he must grant us some sphere in which to grow unto perfection, and gain the stature of men in Christ.

Turning now to the later Revelation we find abundant confirmation of these voices of the human soul. Though the truth of immortality is not clearly proclaimed in the Hebrew Scriptures, there are intimations of it, foregleams shining in the lines and between the lines of patriarchs and prophets. The hope of the Shunammite mother must have been more than mere longing for life beyond death, when, to the prophet's question, "Is it well with thee, is it well with thy husband, is it well with the child?" she answered, "It is well." The same dawning faith appears

in the questions which welled spontaneously from the burdened heart of Job, "If a man die, shall he live again?" "There is hope of a tree if it be cut down that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease, but man dieth and wasteth away, yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" "Shall he live again?" "Where is he?" Not quite sure, yet clinging to the hope that there is life beyond the grave. David shows that he had something more than a dream of future existence, when, bending over the form of his dead child, he exclaimed "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." The Preacher uttered a philosophy worthy of any age, when he said, "The dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

But though these early servants of God had foregleams, they were only foregleams of Immortality. The full revelation was reserved for Him who is greater than Moses, or David, or the Prophets. Christ brought "Life and Immortality to light." He taught in unmistakable language that only the body dies. To the disciples, hunted from city to city by cruel persecution, he said, "Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." To the Sadducees who denied a future life, he said, "In the Resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." And "that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he

called the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not a God of the dead, but of the living, for all men live unto him." These patriarchs had slept for generations, in the grave at Machpelah, and yet as Jesus saw them they were still alive. This truth was made more plain to the disciples, by the visible appearance of Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration. Christ also told them of his own approaching death, and of the resurrection that should follow, and gave them the comforting assurance, "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." These are wonderful words, words which brought the immortal life to the comprehension of men more clearly than any that had ever been spoken before. But words were not enough. They may be misapprehended. They were to the disciples like idle tales. Christ would be a perfect revelation of immortality. The truth he taught he would illustrate before their eyes. Hence he welcomed the pains of the cross. He was laid in the tomb. Its door was closed and sealed and guarded. His enemies would stamp with falsehood his words, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." They would make it plain to all the world that he could not and did not rise.

But there were watchers at that tomb more powerful than the soldiers. Keeping faithful guard were two angels, appointed by the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Man had groped in darkness through the long night of the ages. The hour had come for the day-star to arise. That star arose never to know a setting, when the women came to the sepulchre, and found the stone rolled away, and heard the angel say, "He is not here, but is risen." From that glad hour the disciples were new men. Timid and vacillating before, they were now brave as lions. Confident of immortal life as they were of their own existence, they went forth preaching Jesus and the Resurrection. "Because I live, ye shall live also," was their constant assurance, their perpetual inspiration. In this hope, they planted churches. In this hope, they confronted persecution. In this hope, they sung pæans even in the midst of martyrdom : for they had learned that it is "better to depart and be with Christ ;" that "If our earthly *tent habitation* were dissolved, we have a *building* of God, a *house* not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Having established the truth of an immortal life, by an appeal to the nature of man and the voice of inspiration, let us now see what light we can gain concerning the modes and conditions of our life beyond the grave.

The question which confronted the Apostle is pertinent to-day : "How are the dead raised up, and with what

body do they come?" Will it be a resurrection of the identical material body? No, the body of flesh and blood is not to enter the immortal state. None of us who have felt the pains, experienced the accidents and battled with the want and weakness which inhere in the earthly body, would care to take it up again, after we have laid it down. It serves a wise and useful purpose in this rudimental state; but it is not adapted to the needs of an endless life. Paul makes the question of the resurrection-body very plain. He says, "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die; and that which thou sowest is not the body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." When we plant a grain of corn, we do not expect to see the identical kernel rise. We know that under the chemical influence of sun and shower, the grosser material of which it is composed will be dissolved and drop away. But we also know that it contains a germ, an elemental principle of life, which is quickened by the very elements that destroy the grosser material, and which springs up a more beautiful form, a more vigorous and glorious life. Within

that kernel of corn, in embryo, are "the blade, the ear, the full corn in the ear." Place it under the microscope, and we see them there complete in all their parts, only waiting the vivifying touch of chemical affinities, to burst the shell, and spring into the light an expanded life. Is it not so with man? Take the magnifying lens of Revelation, and look through it into the depths of a human soul. What dost thou behold? An embryo angel, waiting the breath of God that shall give it life and cause the grosser form to drop away. The material form shall not rise in the resurrection. "The body shall return to the dust as it was." A more glorious spiritual body shall rise. "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." And the spiritual body is, in some mysterious way, contained in these forms of flesh and blood, even as the oak is contained in the acorn-shell. The spiritual is not something apart from the material body, which the soul puts on as a garment. It springs from it, and is perhaps fed by it, as the plant springs from the seed.

This is indeed a mystery. So is vegetable life a mystery. We cannot explain, nor even understand, how the tree compacts its fibre, and the flower puts on its delicate hue, any more than we can tell how the spiritual body rises unseen and yet real, when the fleshly body drops away.

But while mysterious, it is not impossible nor unreasonable. If we study human nature with a little care, we find

it easy to believe. If we study nature with a little care, our faith gains confirmation. Suppose that we had never seen an egg, and knew nothing of the life which it contains, would we not as soon expect to see life issue from a stone, and soar and sing, as from its little shell. And yet experience reveals the truth, that the egg contains a bird in embryo.

A loathsome worm grovels in the dust beneath our feet. We see in it no present or prospective beauty. But within that vile form, God can see the butterfly, that is yet to flit on wings of purple and gold, from flower to flower, and sip the choicest nectar. "Who shall change our vile body, and fashion it like unto his own glorious body."

It is only the outer covering that we behold. The eye does not take in a tithe of the marvels that are contained in these temples of the spirit. Man has many bodies. He has a body of bones mysteriously joined together. Then he has a body of sinews, muscles, and flesh, covering the bones, folding them in, holding each in its place, and giving him the form of symmetry which we so much admire. Then he has a body of veins and arteries, interlacing and winding their way to every part of the complex system. Then he has a body of nerves of sensation, so subtle and ethereal that you can hardly tell whether it is matter or spirit sending its threads to the remotest fibres of the intricate economy. Each of these bodies is so per-

fect that if it stood by itself, separated from all the rest, but its several parts in their right relations to each other, you would not only recognize it as a human body, but could almost trace the features of the man to whom it belonged. Then the scientist tells us that there is a body of bioplasm weaving the nerves and other tissues. And, back of all, is the life-force or principle that touches bioplasm and gives it life. But we need go no farther than the nerve-system, with which all are familiar, for our purpose of illustration. If we prick our finger with the finest needle, a nerve, subtle, unseen, ethereal, at once reports to the brain that the finger is in danger. The brain issues its command to the muscular system. Its forces are called into quick action, and the finger is taken out of harm's way. We see a glad and gleeful child approaching, and our hearts meet it with a thrill of joy. Or that child is in a place of exceeding peril, and our hearts stop beating in their agony. We hear a voice of satisfaction, and our soul takes up the song. We hear a wail of sorrow, and our eyes are moist with tears. Imagine another body, running through this complex system, as much more ethereal than the nerve system, as that is than the body of flesh or of bones, and how easy it is to imagine this body, finer than bioplasm, fine as the life-force that moves the bioplasm, clothing the soul, constituting the texture and substance of its being in the fair realm where spirit reigns.

Indeed, if the nerve-system which conveys physical impressions is so delicately strung that it seems almost spiritual, what shall we say of that finer medium of thought and affection, of hope and of memory. We see a lovely object, and our affection kindles at once toward it. What is the electric wire connecting the eye and the seat of affectional life? We hear a reasonable request in gentle tones conveyed, and we run with glad alacrity to fulfil it. We hear a stern unreasonable command, and are in rebellion in a moment. Now what is this channel of communication between the outer and the inner man? We know that there is such a medium, and it sends its complex threads into every department of our being. But precisely what it is, who can tell? We remember a face or voice of long ago, and our heart thrills like the strings of a harp swept by the fingers of David. Or we catch through the shadows of the future a glimpse of good or ill to come, and we are filled with joy or pain. What is this medium of memory and of hope connecting us so closely with the departed days or the coming years? Can the eye see it? Can the hand clasp it? Can science explain it? And yet it is as real as any material thing. Who shall say that these transparent, intangible, incomprehensible channels of thought and feeling, of hope and memory, are not, so to speak, the feet and hands, the eyes and ears, the head and heart of our

spiritual body. They are pent up now in this material form. They are only the germ of what they are to be. Hence affection is cold and reverence is feeble. Hence memory fails and hope is dim. But when they burst these bonds of clay and put on perfect life; when the germ becomes a tree, and the egg is transformed into a bird of paradise, how clear will the vision be, how true and pure its loves, how satisfying and enduring its joys!

Another question which perplexes many minds is that of identity. Shall we retain our conscious personality in the immortal state? If we are to live hereafter at all, we must retain our conscious identity. If I lose all memory of what I am and what my surroundings are, if none of the peculiarities which distinguish me now continue, and there is no connecting tie between the present and the future, there is for *me* no immortal life. Unless this conscious being that I am shall live beyond the river, and live for ever, the thought of immortality is of no personal worth to me. Though another being should be created from my sleeping dust, if I lose my conscious life with the expiring breath, then this life is all there is for me. But I am not confined to such narrow spheres. Paul knew the nature of man and the destiny which awaits him, when he compared the body to a moving tent, and gave the assurance that "If our earthly tent-habitation were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made

with hands, eternal in the heavens." This figure is very significant. We are living now in a tent, a movable, a temporary habitation. We are to have a *building*, a *house*, an eternal abode. One suggests frailty and lack of perpetuity; the other, strength, solidity, endurance. If we move from one house to another, we do not lose identity. We are the same conscious soul in the palace that we were in the tent or hovel, in the new house that we were in the old. Neither shall we lose our conscious selfhood in passing from the earthly to the heavenly house. The change is not in ourselves so much as in our surroundings. The entire life of the soul is one, in this world and in the world to come. If there seem to be two distinct lives, it is because we see inadequately, —see as "through a glass darkly." When our eyes are opened, and we "see as we are seen," we shall find that souls on earth and spirits in heaven form but one family of God, that these are only different apartments in the house of many mansions.

If this be true, the answer of the question becomes natural and easy, "Are our departed friends still cognizant of our condition and interested in our welfare?" The veil is doubtless very thin which separates us from the departed. We see them no longer, because material eyes cannot take in spiritual realities. But they may be near us, their spirit-hands may rest upon us, their love

and sympathy may be as tender and as true as when they walked by our side. Are there not times in our experience when it seems as if we have almost held actual communion with the dead?—when in form and feature, in voice and accent, they come before us so distinctly, that for days it almost seems as if we had enjoyed a visitation from these friends? I thank God that it is so with me. My beloved are not lost or dead. They sit with me in my home. They meet me at the altar of prayer. They help me in my weakness. They cheer me in my despondency. They comfort me when I am troubled. They help me in many ways to gain the victory over the world. They win and lead me up and on toward heaven. I do not mean to say that they come in a form that I can see, or that they present a hand that I can clasp. Such a conception of spirit intercourse were gross and quite unsatisfying. But I am conscious of communion with invisible spirits. And why should it not be so? All Christians believe in the spiritual presence of the Saviour. Eighteen hundred years ago he ascended to his Father and our Father, since which time no mortal eye has seen the head that was crowned with thorns, or the hands that were pierced by the nails. Paul indeed tells us that he had seen the Lord; but he saw, doubtless, not with natural vision, but by a kind of second sight. And yet, though he come not to us in any form that we can see, we

believe that he fulfils the promise, "Lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world." And if Christ may thus come and help and bless us, may we not believe that our own beloved ones, who walked with us these earthly ways, and shared life's good and ill, may, in a similar sense, attend us as our helpers and our friends? There is no room for Christians to doubt, when we remember the words of the Apostle, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister unto those who shall be the heirs of salvation?"


It may be objected that such connection between the living and the dead would destroy the peace of heaven; that the departed ones could not see the sin and suffering that are in the world, without being weighed down by perpetual sorrow. But do they not know, even if they could not see, that it is a world of sorrow, sin, and suffering? Have they not lived in it and experienced its pains? And would it be a source of relief to them to be entirely cut off from all knowledge of the friends whom they have left behind? If you have removed from an old home, leaving aged parents or invalid sisters behind you, do you desire to suspend all intercourse with them lest you should hear that they are suffering? If there is sickness, or sorrow, or even sin in that home, do you not want to know the worst, that you may lend a hand, if possible, to help and save? Are our dear ones who have

passed on from death to life less interested in us who are still in the valley of the shadow of death?

Again, no one believes that God is ignorant of the sin and sorrow that burden our race. Nor does anybody suppose that God is really miserable. Now, how can God, with his great father-heart, look down and see his children struggling in poverty, wasting themselves in sin, bearing the heavy crosses of sickness and bereavement which so weigh down our lives, without becoming the most unhappy being in the universe? Simply because God can take in all conditions and relations, causes and results. He foresees the end of these human ills. He knows that "these light afflictions which are but for a moment, shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." It may be so with our translated ones as they look down from heaven. Their vision may be so enlarged, that they can comprehend God's gracious plan, and so see harmony where we see only conflict and confusion. Then they must know that these "afflictions are but for a moment." And while they give us sympathy in the hard struggle by which we climb the rugged way of life, they rejoice; for they see that the race is almost ended, that but a little way before us is the home of everlasting peace and rest.

These reflections bring us to an easy answer of that other question which, rising from the heart, trembles upon

the lips of so many bereaved ones, "Shall we know our friends hereafter?" If we retain our identity, and there is an intimate connection between the present and the future, recognition follows as a natural consequence. Our separation is only for a little while. The longest life on earth is but a day with God and those who dwell with him. We may have intuitions or instincts adapted to our higher state by which we shall find our own. But if this shall not be, and if with the lapse of time we might forget them, they will never forget us. They are constantly watching over us, and will come to meet us when we cross the river to the bright immortal shore. Recognition and reunion are indispensable to a perfect heaven. God has joined us to our fellow-men by tender, social, and kindred ties. Much of our purest joy, many of our holiest interests, are associated with our friends. They are intimately linked with all our memories and hopes. If we retain our identity, these memories will extend into the future life. Unless we lose all that is purest and best within us, these loves and interests will continue there. We desire the companionship of our beloved now. We shall want their presence and fellowship always. Unless we meet them in the home of the soul, though its walls were of jasper, its gates pearl, its streets gold, and its temple of light, it will be no real home. We shall be for ever longing, pining, seeking for the loved and lost.



Shall all be equal as they enter upon the life that is to be? Or shall there be different degrees of attainment and of happiness there as here? Evidently the latter. We take with us such acquisitions only as we have gained. We begin life on the other shore with the same spiritual stature that we leave it here. If we have wisely improved the school of time, we are well fitted to enter the school of eternity. If we have squandered our opportunities, we must take our place at the foot of the class. If we have kept God's law, and lived in fellowship with our Saviour, we enter that world as "men in Christ." If we have put God and Christ away from heart and mind, we must begin as little children. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, and one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." Death rids us of many hindrances, but it adds nothing to our spirit's stature. We are saved by the truth and grace of Christ received into the willing soul, not by the archer's spear or the sepulchre's mould. But each soul is given standing-room, and a chance for improvement on the shore of eternity. Each soul is still a child of God, and a pupil in the school of Christ. Each soul has the goal of perfection before him, and the voice of God still calling him to so run as to attain. We shall be aided and encouraged by those who are in advance of us, while

we in turn shall lend a hand of help to such as are beneath us, and as mutual helpers we shall rise from strength to strength, from glory to glory, and our voices shall blend in the joy song of redemption.

Arctic explorers tell us that in the cheerless polar regions there is an attempt on the part of nature, during the brief summer, to put on verdure and bloom. On the sunny side of the iceberg, where the earth appears, cedars and willows spring up and try to grow. But the summer is so short, and the winter so severe and long, that they never attain a growth of more than six inches high. A whole forest of them can be covered by the palm of the hand. To become trees in that land of ice and snow is impossible, although it is in their nature to grow unto gigantic proportions. Transplant one of those cedars to the deeper soil of the temperate zone, and note the change. It has the same nature and begins here with the same stature. But its surroundings are more favorable. It strikes its roots into the fertile earth. It lifts its trunk and branches into the warm air and sunlight. It drinks the dew and rain, and grows from year to year, until at length it stands a monarch of the hill.

Man is not unlike the cedar beneath the iceberg. It is but little growth which any soul attains in this winter-world. Some of our race, the Pauls and the Newtons, become perhaps six inches high; the great majority of

men only break ground on this earthly shore. But there is a deathless principle of life and growth in every soul. All are transplanted to the summer-land of immortality. And there, in the sunshine of an infinite love, and beneath the showers of an infinite mercy, we shall grow in grace and knowledge, and fulfil the purpose of our creation, and stand at last, exalted, crowned, and honored, as immortal sons of God.

UNIVERSALISM (SCRIPTURE).

BY A. ST. JOHN CHAMBRÉ, D.D.

AS no alleged revelation of Holy Scripture is to be established by isolated passages, or any mere collocation of texts, it is not claimed that those presently to be examined demonstrate, apart from all other considerations, the doctrine of universal salvation. The Biblical teaching upon the great subject of human destiny is to be gathered from the scope and drift of Holy Scripture, and from the revelation which it makes of the character of God, and of the relations which exist between God and men. There must be noted the declared purpose of God in creation, especially the creation of humanity, the nature of humanity, the fact and possibilities of sin, and the object and progressive unfolding of the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. Other chapters of this book will, no doubt, bring all this, more or less fully, to the attention of the reader.

Nevertheless, it is desirable, and quite important, to discover what textual basis there may be in the sacred writings for the doctrine of the final salvation of all men. It

is therefore proposed to show that a large class of Scripture passages at least appear to teach this doctrine, and to teach it explicitly. It is not overlooked that other interpretations may be put upon them, and are put upon them. But it will be seen that they are fairly susceptible of an interpretation in harmony with Universalism. Nay, in many instances it will be perceived that the only obvious and natural interpretation compels this. It is, of course, impossible to quote here all the texts accepted by Universalists as teaching their faith. Many, considered even stronger, in certain particulars, than any advanced, must be altogether unnoticed. In the limits assigned, the design is to make as clear as possible certain affirmations and declarations of inspiration. It is not believed that, in any instance, Scripture has been strained or wrested. There certainly has been no such intention. In no case, moreover, is the critical exegesis exhausted. This could not be, without more space than has been allotted to this chapter. Besides, this book is designed at least as much for the unlearned as for those who have power to examine the original versions for themselves.

Immediately after the Fall, and the fearful curse pronounced as consequent upon it, the Old Testament records a magnificent promise and prophecy of a redemption that should be commensurate therewith. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy

seed and her seed : it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." ¹ On this, Dr. Lange says, "The protevangel . . . contains the germ of all later Messianic prophecies ; therefore, it is so universal, so comprehensive, so dark, and yet so striking and distinct in its fundamental features. As the ground outline of the future salvation, it denotes, 1. The religious ethical strife between good and evil in the world, and the sensible presentation of this strife through natural contrasts,—the serpent, the woman. 2. The concrete form of this strife and its gradual genealogical unfoldings : the seed of the serpent, the seed of the evil one, and the children of evil ; the seed of the good and the children of salvation. 3. The decision to be expected : the wounding of the woman's seed in the heel ; that is, in his human capability of suffering, and its connection with the earth ; the treading down, or the destruction, not of the serpent's seed merely, but of the serpent himself, and that, too, in his head, the very centre of his life. The whole is, therefore, the prediction of an universal conflict for salvation, with the prospect of victory. From this basis, the promise proceeds in ever-narrowing circles, until it passes over from the general seed of the woman to the ideal seed, and from that again draws out in ever-widening circles, together with the self-unfolding promise of the kingdom of God. Thereby, too,

¹ Gen. iii. 15.

does the conception of the promise assume an ever-deeper and richer form.”¹

This is sufficiently suggestive, while it is certainly carefully guarded in the interest of a limited triumph of good over evil. A critical examination of the promise, however, leaves no room to doubt its intended universal application, with the “prospect of victory” as universal as the “prediction of an universal conflict for salvation.” The enmity shall be between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. The serpent, which, whatever else it may mean, means sin, shall bruise the heel of the seed of the woman. But the seed of the woman, *he* — *הוא* — shall bruise, utterly crush, destroy, — *יִשְׁרָף* — the head of the serpent. The promise and prophecy gradually unfold. To Abram, of the seed of the woman, it is said, “In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed ;”² and, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”³ The same promise is made to Isaac⁴ and to Jacob,⁵ of the seed of Abraham. That both prophecy and promise rest in Jesus Christ will not be questioned. St. Peter declared to the people of Jerusalem, “Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first, God, hav-

¹ Com. in Gen., p. 247, Am. ed.

² Gen. xxii. 18.

³ Gen. xxviii. 14.

⁴ Gen. xii. 3.

⁵ Gen. xxvi. 4.

ing raised up his Son, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”¹ St. Paul says, “The Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the heather through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ.”² Unto Christ, and his work of salvation, is then traced the promise of salvation, in the words, “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many: but as of one,—And to thy seed, which is Christ.”³ Christ, therefore, is the seed of the woman, of whom it is said, “He shall bruise thy head.” “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”⁴ The blessing is to be to “all nations,” to “all kingdoms,” to “all families” of the earth, and is to consist in the turning away of all (every one) from iniquities, in order to their adoption as sons of God; *i.e.*, in order to their salvation.

In no instance will a critical examination of the Old Testament prove adverse to this prophecy and promise. So far as it makes a revelation at all, it is a revelation—

¹ Acts iii. 25, 26.

³ Gal. iii. 16.

² Gal. iii. 8, 14.

⁴ Gal. iv. 4, 5.

notwithstanding all the sin and wandering of humanity, and in absolute harmony with the severest judgments on account of sin — of goodness, of mercy, of love, of long-suffering, of forbearance, and of forgiveness, on the part of God towards the children of men. Of the memorable interview between God and Moses it is said, "And the Lord passed before him, and proclaimed, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."¹ The whole passage is remarkable for its strength and beauty, and its wide-sweeping significance. He is "long-suffering," — *long*, i.e. *slow of anger*, אַרְךָ אַפִּים. He is the *lastingly strong God*, אֱלֹ; and therefore He is "keeping mercy," there is *abiding kindness*, רַחֲמֵי, with Him, *to the thousands*, לְאֻלְפִים, — not of individuals only, but of years and of ages. For ever, or while it shall be needed, He forgives, is *lifting*, נִשָּׂא, i.e. taking away, the sins of men. The Psalmist has substantially the same thought, when he says, "He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever."² "Thus saith the Lord" to Isaiah, "I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made."³ It would seem that no words could more forcibly express the

¹ Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7.² Ps. ciii. 9.³ Is. lvii. 16.

perpetual loving-kindness and tender mercy of the Infinite, or the intention of God to turn away His judgments, when they shall have served their end, and accomplished their purpose. Isaiah plainly intimates that no soul could exist under an abiding condemnation. It would exhale its life under the fearfulness of its hopelessness; it would cease to exist as a sentient being. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews — that New-Testament commentary on the Pentateuch — well paraphrases the record of the revelation which God makes of Himself to Moses: "For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."¹ The quintuple negation, *οὐ μὴ σε ἀνῶ, οὐδ' οὐ μὴ σε ἐγκαταλίπω*, is of great force and significance. It is equivalent to "I will not, I will not leave thee. I will never, never, never forsake thee." The eternal God eternally abides in kindness. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The same towards each, and towards every human creature. His mercy remains "unto the thousands" of men and of ages.

When the fulness of the times was come, God sent forth his Son. In this seed of the woman, the intent of God in the redemption of the world is made clear to an extent of which the old world had no conception. The thoughts here suggested cannot now be developed. The examination of the New Testament reveals the fulfilment of

¹ Heb. xiii. 5.

salvation, — the “filling up of salvation” promised and prophesied under the elder dispensation. The seed of the woman appears, whose work is to bruise the serpent’s head.

Take the annunciation of the angel, and the song of the heavenly host, at the advent. “Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”¹ Here is the proclamation of the Gospel — *εὐαγγελίζομαι*, good tidings, — which is a great grace, *χαρὰν*, an occasion of great joy, “which shall be to *all*, to the people,” *ἥτις ἔσται παντὶ τῷ λαῷ*. That this has reference to the people of Israel only is a position not justified by the text — is, indeed, subversive of the whole idea of the Gospel, which is asserted to be for the world. In view of this Gospel, there is ascribed glory in the highest to God; and the assurance of peace to men, of His good pleasure. *Ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκία*, “to men of pleasure” must be rendered, to men, of the pleasure of God, *i. e.* of the free grace of God. “For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost,”² *ἀπολωλός*. He came to seek and to save the utterly lost, perished. *Ἀπόλλυμι* is very strong. Yet, from this con-

¹ Luke ii. 10, 11, 14.

² Luke xix. 10.

dition of death the Son of Man saves, — seeks out, and saves.

Jesus Christ is the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."¹ He lifts, *αἴρων*; carries away, *ἁρῶν*; the sin of the world, *κόσμον*. Jew and Gentile are included here, throughout the world. This, in the most comprehensive sense possible.

"God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through him, might be saved."² Not that *κρίνῃ τὸν κόσμον*, but that *σωθῇ ὁ κόσμος*, through him. The Gospel is of salvation, not of condemnation. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things unto his hands."³ Hath given all, *πάντα*, *i.e.* every one, into his hands. For what purpose? To what end? "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."⁴ All, *πάν*, "every one" whom God hath given — He has given every one — shall come, *ἔξει*; and the one who comes, he will never, never, *οὐ μὴ*, cast out, or reject.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."⁵ These words are remarkable at once for their strength and their reach of significance. However they may point to the cross and its power, they reach beyond, and take hold of the exaltation of Christ, and his

¹ John i. 29.

² John iii. 17.

³ John iii. 35.

⁴ John vi. 37. Comp. 38, 39, 40.

⁵ John xii. 32.

reign beyond this world, in which he is still drawing to himself. The Greek is, *καὶ γὰρ, ἐὰν ὑψωθῶ ἐκ τῆς γῆς, πάντας ἐλκύσω πρὸς ἐμαυτόν.* "And I, when I shall have been exalted *out of* the earth, all (every one) I shall draw to myself." It would seem that no declaration could well be stronger, or more wide-reaching, or more complete. It takes in the ages, present and future, for the carrying forward, and the completion, of the great work of redemption which Christ came to effect.

"Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."¹ The "all flesh" here, *πάσης σαρκὸς*, is a commentary upon the "all," the "every one," we have already had. The Lord Jesus has authority over every one, that to every one may be given eternal life, *ζωὴν αἰώνιον*, *i.e.* spiritual life, the life of God in the soul, without which, of course, there is no salvation, but with which salvation is assured.

If the Gospels are left at this point, it is not because they are exhausted in relation to the subject-matter of this chapter, but only because there is no space for further reference. The blessing promised in the garden, repeated to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and expressed in manifold types and symbols, has taken form. The seed of the woman, Jesus Christ, who was before Abraham, is revealed with power and will to destroy the seed of the serpent.

¹ John xvii. 2.

The glad message and assurance of salvation are continued by the apostles, when the Son of God was received up into glory. St. Peter reminded the Jews, after he had healed the lame man at the beautiful gate of the temple, that it was by virtue of faith in Christ that the miracle was performed, — faith in him whom they had so recently crucified, but who had burst the bars of death, and was risen into heaven, — and then states, “Whom heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”¹ Direct reference is then made to the Abrahamic covenant, and to Samuel, and to all who followed after, foretelling “those days,” verse 24, τὰς ἡμέρας ταύτας, *i.e.* of “the restitution of all things.” The restitution of all things is the *restoration* of all, of “every one,” ἀποκαταστάσεως πάντων. Specific reference, no doubt, for the purpose in hand, is made of the promise by the Apostle to those about him, the Jews, as the children of Abraham; but the promise is itself world-wide and universal. This can scarcely be seriously questioned. The *usus loquendi* requires ἀποκαταστάσεως to be understood as a restoration, a reinstating in a condition which had been forfeited or lost, *i.e.* a condition of purity, and fellowship with God, such as is represented as existing before the temptation and Fall. Substantially, though naturally

¹ Acts iii. 21.

guardedly, this idea of universal restoration is accepted by the latest authorities.¹

In the thought of the Apostles, the whole race was lost in sin, bound by it, and unable to escape from it and its curse. So St. Paul, setting forth the grace of God, asserts, that "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."² The conclusion is very clear, and very fully set forth, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: therefore, as by the offence of one, *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."³ Whatever dogmatic views may be held with regard to the Fall, or the Sin, or the nature of the Death here spoken of, the purpose of the Apostle is evidently to show grace triumphing over sin, and life over death, and a restoration to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. To this effect are the latest, most learned criticisms. Dr. Schaff⁴ says: "The complete

¹ Lechler in Lange. Com. Acts iii. 11-26. Doc. et Eth. 6, p. 69.

² Rom. v. 8.

³ Rom. v. 12, 18, 19, 21.

⁴ Lange. Com. Rom. p. 175, n.

antithesis would read thus: 'As, ὥσπερ, by one man (Adam) sin, ἡ ἁμαρτία, entered into the world, and death, ὁ θάνατος, through sin, and thus death extended, διήλθεν, to all men, inasmuch as all sinned, ἡμαρτον: so also, οὕτως καί, by one man, Jesus Christ, righteousness, ἡ δικαιοσύνη, entered into the world, and life, ἡ ζωή, through righteousness, and thus life shall extend, διελεύσεται, to all men, inasmuch as (on condition that¹) all shall believe, πιστεύουσιν.

. . . The great points of comparison are: (1) Sin and death as a principle and power, proceeding from Adam; righteousness and life, as a counteracting and conquering principle and power, proceeding from Christ, upon the whole human race. (2) Death passing upon all men by participation in the sin of Adam; life passing upon all men by participation in the righteousness of Christ." This language, from the point of view occupied by Dr. Schaff, is very direct, and very explicit. It is true, that an immediate effort is made to destroy the logical force of the language, and to show that the analogy is not absolute, since, while all men are one with Adam, all men are not one with Christ! Nevertheless, honest criticism evokes the confession that "what Christ gained for us is far greater (πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἐπερίσσειεν, v. 15, compare τὴν περισσείαν

¹ There can be no doubt that faith is a "condition" of salvation. "All shall believe," is, however, the obvious thought of the Apostle. It would seem, then, that the "on condition that" is a gloss that may be rejected. It is not germane to the text, which is not conditional.

τῆς χάριτος, v. 17, and ὑπερπερίσσευσεν ἡ χάρις, v. 20) than what was lost by Adam." The remarkable admission is also made,¹ that "The inference of a *universal salvation* from this verse (19), as also from ver. 15 (εἰς τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐπερίσσευσεν), and 18 (εἰς πάντα ἀνθρώπους εἰς δικαίωσιν ζωῆς), is very plausible on the surface, and might be made quite strong if this section could be isolated from the rest of Paul's teachings on the terms of salvation," etc. It is not only "very plausible," but — and not without careful examination — it is difficult to see how any other conclusion, not to say "inference," can be deduced from these and the other verses under consideration. The οἱ πολλοί and the τοὺς πολλοὺς of v. 15 have, beyond doubt, the same force. If the "many" be dead, through the offence of one, the grace of Jesus Christ abounds to the same "many." Beyond all doubt, also, the πάντα ἀνθρώπους, twice repeated in v. 18, has the same significance as the οἱ πολλοί of v. 15. The judgment of condemnation on account of sin was to "all men," to "the many" dead in sin. The same "all men" are the men who have sinned, and upon whom death passed on account of sin, v. 12. As there can be no limitation in the one case of the πάντες, οἱ πολλοί, πάντα ἀνθρώπους, so there can be none in the other. As extensive as is the evil of sin, so extensive is the remedy. If Adam is the type of universal sinfulness,

¹ Lange. Com. Rom., p. 189.

Christ is the type of universal righteousness. If in Adam all men are lost, in Christ all men *are to be* saved, — “shall be,” fut. indic., *κατασταθήσονται*.

“For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.”¹ The word “creature,” in verses 19, 20, 21, must be rendered “creation,” *κτίσις*, as it is in v. 22. In v. 20, according to the most approved reading, a comma should be placed before the words “in hope,” *ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι*, which should be immediately connected with v. 21. The whole creation is in hope of deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God, *εἰς τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τῆς δόξης τῶν τέκνων τοῦ θεοῦ*. It is the patient, eager expectation, hope, *ἀποκαραδοκία*, of the creation. It is subject to vanity, to this bondage of corruption, not willingly, but by the will of God; but in hope of deliverance. For this creation groans and travails. Can there be a reasonable doubt of the result? Whatever view may be taken of the meaning of “creation,” *κτίσις*, it must at least *include*

¹ Rom. viii. 19–22.

humanity, and point definitely to all humanity not yet redeemed, but needing and capable of redemption. Consciously or unconsciously, humanity is striving after salvation, — after God, as its final goal. That humanity is, at least primarily, in the thought of the apostle, by *κρίσις*, would appear from the consummation to which the *κρίσις* looks, — the freedom of the glory of the children of God, as the heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, v. 17. That there is here a direct pointing to the “Restitution of all things,” to final, universal salvation, would seem to be clear. The whole chapter is to this effect, and will well repay careful and critical consideration, especially with reference to its closing words: “For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, *κρίσις ἑτέρα*, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” What more could be added here to make this universal in significance?

“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits: that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall

take away their sins. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things : to whom be glory for ever. Amen." ¹ The entire chapter ought to be thoughtfully consulted, and will well repay careful study, as it labors to show, that whatever may be the temporary obscurations, Jews and Gentiles, in the "economy," *οικονομία*, of God, are destined for salvation. The purpose of God loses sight of no individual, and keeps steadily in view the reconciliation of all things to Him. The blindness, or hardness, *πώρωσις*, was upon Israel only until the fulness, *πλήρωμα*, of the Gentiles should come in, *εἰσέλθῃ*. Clearly, into the kingdom of God, into faith in Christ, unto salvation, in an absolute sense, all Gentiles shall be brought, — equally all Israel, *πᾶς Ἰσραήλ*. Language could not well be stronger. God has concluded *all*, *τοὺς πάντας*, both Jew and Gentile, in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon them all, *τοὺς πάντας*. That the Apostle teaches universal salvation here, can be evaded only upon the ground that he knew that some souls would refuse to accept the proffered mercy, and so, in the exercise of a freedom which will not be disturbed, would be self-excluded from heaven. If the possibility of such a result could be shown, it might shake the argument. But to do this is, in the nature of the case, impossible. Given

¹ Rom. xi. 25, 26, 27, 32, 36.

the purpose of God to secure universal salvation, and human freedom will freely bow at length to Him. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."¹ There is absolutely no evidence that the Apostle doubted the fulness of his own argument. Well, therefore, might he exclaim, "For of him, and through him, and unto him, *εἰς αὐτόν*, are all things, *τὰ πάντα*, to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."² Whatever the "death" may mean, whether taken in the largest sense, or only as referring to physical dissolution, these words are significant of universality. The same "all," *πάντες*, who "are dying," *ἀποθνήσκουσιν*, "shall be made alive," fut. indic., *ζωοποιηθήσονται*, in Christ. Beyond this, *i.e.*, after the resurrection, although when is not stated, nor can it be known to us without a revelation, there shall be an "end." "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued

¹ Ps. cx. 3.² 1 Cor. xv. 22.

unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."¹ This "end," v. 24, *τέλος*, may refer, as is sometimes assumed, to the termination of the process, or processes, of the resurrection, which may be successive and progressive. But, however that may be, it certainly points to the closing of the Messianic reign, when the present state of things shall be past, and an immortal life, embracing all, shall be fairly entered upon. *At this time*, whenever it shall be, the mediatorial kingdom will be delivered up to God. *Previous to this* will have been put down all rule, and authority, and power, — that is, as is almost universally conceded, all that is not in harmony with God and His righteousness. Christ must himself reign until this shall be accomplished, until *all* enemies are subdued. Last of all, death itself is destroyed. It is destroyed, done away with, by the completion of the resurrection. Then, when Christ has brought all, *τὰ πάντα*, into subjection to himself, he will deliver up his mediatorial kingdom, and subject himself, *ὑποταγέσεται*, to God, who originally put all, *τὰ πάντα*, under him, and then God will be *τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσι*, — "not all in some," but ALL in ALL. The critical objections to this conclusion are not out of mind ; but they obtain validity only by a departure from the obvious meaning of the Apostle's language, as well as the

¹ Cor. xv. 24-28.

entire drift of his argument. Truly, "God was in Christ reconciling a world unto himself."¹

"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him."² It is the good pleasure of God, purposed in Himself, v. 9, that in the fulness of time He will *gather up together in one*, all, τὰ πάντα, in Christ, ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ. All in the heavens, τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, and all on the earth, τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. Here, again, whatever meaning we may assign to τὰ πάντα, it must be inclusive of humanity. Its universality is almost universally conceded. Indeed, there can be no doubt that it was the intention of the Apostle to refer definitely to *men*, referring, as he does, again to Christ, in v. 11, and declaring that in him "*we* have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

"Wherefore, God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name : That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."³ "Every knee," πᾶν γόνυ, refers, of course, to beings. "In heaven," "in earth,"

¹ 2 Cor. v. 19.² Eph. i. 10.³ Philip. ii. 9, 10, 11.

"under the earth," it is conceded, signify the entire realm of worshipping creatures, — the whole intelligent creation. "Every tongue," *πᾶσα γλῶσσα*, has the same significance. The bowing of the knee, *κῆρυξ*, is the act of adoration. The confession of the tongue, *ἐξομολόγηται*, is the expression of what the bending knee indicates, — the acknowledgment, including the praise and gratitude for good received, of the Lordship of Christ, to the glory of God the Father. If universal salvation is not involved in all this, it is, at least, a strange use of language.

"For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to Himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."¹ As before, the *τὰ πάντα* here, the "all," has reference — can only have reference — to *every one* — every one needing, or susceptible of, salvation, and must be inclusive of humanity, if not applying *only* to humanity. All, whether they be on the earth, or whether they be in the heavens, *εἴτε τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, εἴτε τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς*. For *all men* is peace "being made through the blood of his cross." "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." All men, therefore, according to this, will God "reconcile to himself," *ἀποκαταλλάξαι εἰς αὐτόν*, through Jesus Christ.

¹ Colos. i. 19, 20.

"I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men, *πάντων ἀνθρώπων*, for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have, *θέλει*, all men, *πάντας ἀνθρώπους*, to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, *ἀνθρώπων*, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, *πάντων*, to be testified in due time." ¹ The language is very explicit. The all men for whom we are enjoined to pray, are the all men God will have to be saved, and the all men for whom Christ gave himself a ransom. This universality is conceded. It is objected, however, that the "will have," *θέλει*, of God is not determinative of salvation to all men. It is urged that it is simply a *desire* on the part of God. But, and obviously, the whole drift of the language of the Apostle, in the verses above, is against the idea of mere desire. The verb, moreover, carries, not only the meaning of wish, or desire, but the idea of deliberate purpose; a will, back of which is ability and power to accomplish it. Donegan gives the form, *θελω*: "To will; to wish,—to be wont or accustomed, and, *according to the context*, to be able, to mean." In accordance with the

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 1-6.

context above, the *natural* idea is, a will of purpose, and of a purpose which, in the nature of the case, cannot be thwarted. Only the thought that the doctrine of the "Restoration" cannot be in the New Testament, could lead to any other view. The Apostle has the same word, when he says, "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, *θελήματος* (from *θέλω*), according to his good pleasure, which he had purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ," &c. Even as a will of desire only, however, it would be impossible that it should fail. God's own words are : "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."¹

It would seem further, that, among the Gentiles, perhaps also among the Jews, a measure of the persecution the Apostle experienced, grew out of the nature of the faith he proclaimed. He declares : "For, therefore, we both labor, and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, *πάντων ἀνθρώπων*, especially of those that believe."² Without reservation, God is here set forth as the Saviour of all men ; while he is, also, in an especial manner, the Saviour of believers. The word *σωτήρ*, Saviour, uniformly so translated, in connection with God or Christ must be taken in its fullest sense. Of the nature of the special salvation there need be no expla-

¹ Isaiah xlv. 10.² 1 Tim. iv. 10.

nation, since, obviously, the reference can only be to those already entered into the faith of the Gospel. What God intends for all, all will obtain in due time. It is given, in large measure, at once, to those who now accept Him and the word of His grace.

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”¹ Literally, “For the grace of God imparting salvation to all men hath appeared.” That is to say, It is revealed that the grace of God imparts salvation to all men, *πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις*. The construction, “imparting salvation to all men,” *σωτήριος πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις*, is in strict accordance with the text, in the light of most recent researches. “Bringing salvation,” — which is perhaps as good a rendering, though not as true and clear, — is adopted by such exegetes as Alford, Ellicot, De Wette, &c. The *ἡ* of the received version is rejected, as not in the best codices.

“Thou hast put all things, *πάντα*, in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all, *τὰ πάντα*, in subjection under him; he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things, *τὰ πάντα*, put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory

¹ Titus ii. 11, 12.

and honor ; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man, *ὑπὲρ παντός.*"¹ Man was created in the image of God, when made a living soul.² He is thus crowned with glory and honor. In the purpose of God, all things were to be subject to man,³ except God. This dominion, and this honor and glory, might be — was temporarily — lost. But it should be regained in the Messianic world, or reign of Christ, — realized before that reign should end, and the kingdom be delivered up to God. The writer to the Hebrews argues, that we do not see all this accomplished yet, and now, as to man. But we do see Jesus, made, as man himself was made, also a little lower than the angels in his humanity, on account of his suffering of death crowned with glory and honor — which death he died, by the grace of God, for every man, *ὑπὲρ παντός.* Of this final clause, Dr. Moll⁴ says : "The author's main point is not to explain why Jesus has gone *through suffering* to glory, . . . but to declare the object to be subserved alike by the incarnation of the First-Born, and the exaltation of the Crucified One in the inseparable unity of the theanthropic person, Jesus ; viz., the fulfilment of the divine purpose, that Jesus should, by the grace of God, for the benefit of every one, taste of death." Dr. Moll says, indeed, that "there is no reason for laying

¹ Heb. ii. 8, 9.² Gen. i. 26 ; ii. 7.³ Gen. i. 26-28 ; Ps. viii.⁴ Lange. Com. Heb. ii. 5-13, p. 51.

the entire stress on *ὑπὲρ παντός*," but admits that "the masc. sing. is employed with a designed emphasis." He says, moreover, that "the weight of the thought is rather distributed nearly equally between the impressive closing words *γεύσεται θανάτου*, *taste of death*, the *ὑπὲρ παντός*, which declares the *universality* of the purpose and merit of his death, accomplished by his entrance into glory, and the *χάριτι θεοῦ*, which refers back the whole, for its efficient and originating cause, to the grace of God." The ideal seed of the woman, crowned with glory and honor, is the representative man, the pledge that humanity will be in like manner crowned in the fulness of time.

"He is the propitiation for our sins, — and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," ¹ *περὶ ὅλον τοῦ κόσμου*. Whatever may be implied in the word "propitiation" here, it must certainly apply not only to those already believers, but to the "whole world." Dr. Braune,² while assuredly not accepting the conclusion of the Universalists, remarks upon this passage: "The Apostle's design was manifestly to show the universality of the propitiation, in the most emphatic manner, and without any exception. This renders any and every limitation inadmissible." The *ἱλασμός*, the reconciliation unto God, is of the whole world, in the salvation of the world from sin, through Jesus Christ.

¹ 1 John ii. 2.

² Lange. Com. 1 John ii. 1, 2, p. 45.

In conclusion, not as having exhausted the subject, or as having examined all the passages bearing upon the question, but because the allotted space has been used, attention is called to the words, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."¹ The word "record" will be better rendered "testimony." He that believeth on the Son of God has the solemn witness — testimony — of God in him, — the testimony which God testifieth of his Son, μαρτυρίαν, μαρτυρήκεν. Which testimony is, that He has given eternal life to men in Jesus Christ. Is this true, or is it not? Has He, or has He not? If not, no man can prove Him false by unbelief. But if otherwise, every man may well tremble at that attitude of unbelief *which makes God a liar.*

¹ 1 John v. 10, 11.

UNIVERSALISM (PHILOSOPHY).

BY PRESIDENT ELMER H. CAPEN.

EVERY system of truth which lays claim to human belief must be able to vindicate its philosophy. It is not enough that it can point to the obvious teaching of Holy Scripture ; it must also show that it accords with human reason, that it does no violence to the nature of God as we know it, or to the nature of man as we have observed it. Tradition, doctrine, authority, the most positive declarations apparently of the Bible, cannot long make head against antecedent improbabilities. It is more likely, men will not fail to conclude, that our interpretations of Scripture should be erroneous, than that reason, experience, and the known sequences of things should be at fault. The intellectual progress of the world has established this conclusion, namely, that truth is uniform ; that the law of God is harmonious and all-pervading ; that nowhere in the universe is one set of principles opposed to another set of principles ; that whatever is unmistakably taught on one plane of being must be essentially true in every stage of existence, however enlarged and strengthened by a deeper knowledge or a wider experi-

ence. The hope not only of religion, but of every phase of religious development, is limited by its ability to recommend itself to the thought and life of humanity.

No form of belief has made stronger or more confident appeals to the Scriptures than Universalism. Against every assault it has intrenched itself successfully behind the unmistakable declarations of God's Word. The Scriptural arguments in its defence have always been in the nature of a demonstration, while its exegesis of difficult and disputed passages is in substantial agreement with the best scholarship of every time. But the Scriptural argument is effectually reinforced by the philosophy of Universalism ; and it carries conviction when it is candidly examined, because it so fully coincides with the instinctive beliefs of the human soul. Given the nature of God as it is conceived by every Christian, and the Universalist conclusion respecting his relations, not only to the whole, but to every particular member, of the universe, is inevitable. It is only when some conflicting element in revelation is assumed, or when the mind bows to the demands of a relentless creed, that a result at variance with this is reached.

The essential features of Universalism, briefly stated, are these : —

1. Its Theology embraces (1) God, infinite, all-wise, just. His attributes are rooted in and all their operations

are controlled by love, which is his nature. He is not only the Creator of every thing, but the Father of every soul. An intelligent plan preceded the creation, and runs through it from the beginning to the end. Nothing has been created, nothing permitted, that did not enter into this plan, or is not effectually held in its grasp. God is everywhere ; not in the theosophic, nor yet in the pantheistic sense, but as a tender, loving, paternal, consciously active, independent, free Personality, who directs all the activities of time and eternity, shapes all events, moulds and wins all souls to himself.

The Universalist Theology embraces (2) Christ, the Son of the Father, who was from the beginning with him, sharing his counsels, executing his will. He voluntarily took upon himself our nature, and lived among us a purely human, although in some respects a superhuman, transfigured, divine life. He taught after the fashion of men, although his doctrine bore upon it the unmistakable marks of its heavenly origin. He meekly suffered reproach for the truth's sake, and died in his unyielding devotion to the will of God and the welfare of men. The mysterious but simple and apparent union thus of two natures, the divine and the human, in the person of Christ, makes him not merely the representative of God to us, not merely the elder brother of man, in whom the possibilities of our nature are realized, but the connecting

link between the divine and the human, the medium of communication between us and our heavenly Father, the one by whom the whole human race, and every individual member of it, is brought into contact and connection with God. No system holds more tenaciously to the always active, living presence and power of Christ. No system makes the dependence of the soul more absolute upon him for spiritual instruction, for moral guidance, for every thing that constitutes its essential life, as well as for the fulfilment of its heaven-aspiring hopes.

In respect of the doctrine of (3) the Holy Ghost, the Universalist Theology is at one with primitive Christianity. It holds to the truth, which is as old as the Church, that the Spirit ever "proceedeth from the Father and the Son ;" that it is that by which God manifests himself, makes his presence and power felt in history, in nations, in institutions of every name, in the soul of man ; that it is that through which the divine work is done, and is the unceasing witness of the Father's personal interest and love ; that it is that also by which Christ impresses himself upon our consciousness, appeals to our sympathies, draws forth our affections, realizes the promise, "I will not leave you comfortless ;" that it is that which pleads and strives with men everywhere, reminding them of neglected duty, reproving them for sin, quickening, stimulating, urging them to an obedient and holy life ; that it is that which inter-

cedes for men with God, striving with us and for us, giving effectual emphasis to our prayers, keeping us from despondency and fear, filling us with fresh hope, begetting within us, even in seasons of disappointment and sorrow, matchless peace and heavenly joy, — always lifting us, on the abundant and irrepressible tide of its energy, towards the bosom of the Infinite.

2. In its doctrine of Man, Universalism holds that man is a child of God. He is endowed with attributes which are like God's, and which proclaim his immortal nature and destiny. He has intelligence and a moral sense. He is responsible and free. He has the power of distinguishing right and wrong, and can choose between them. But, whatever choice he makes, he is accountable for it. He is under law. If he does wrong, he must pay the penalty of wrong. If he does right, the voice of God will say, "Well done." But penalty is not arbitrarily annexed to wrong-doing; there is no element of vindictiveness in it. It is not applied for the purpose of soothing the offended majesty of Heaven. It is remedial in its aim. It reminds the offender that he is God's child, and that he has broken God's law. If he sins repeatedly, he will be punished repeatedly. No amount of penalty can destroy his freedom. He may choose to sin as long as he is willing to take sin and penalty together. But, whenever he shall be

moved to a different choice, the way will be open. Neither can his freedom operate in any way to destroy the relation which exists between him and God. Whatever he does, whatever he suffers, he is still God's child; and nothing can permanently efface from his soul the image of the Father. He is always, therefore, under the moral government of God. For his sake this government was established. For his sake, that is, the law was given, the prophets sent, the Gospel proclaimed; for his sake Christ died. No more emphatic testimony than this could be given of the inherent worth of the human soul. It is not, therefore, according to the nature of things, not within the range of the divine possibilities, that man ever should be abandoned to his own devices, ever utterly given over to a "reprobate mind;" but he will be held in the divine control and the divine love until of his own choice he acknowledges the justice of that control, and yields joyfully and thankfully to the behests of that love.

3. These views of God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and Man, foreshadow the Universalist view of Destiny. We hold that the sovereignty of God will be completely vindicated in the ultimate harmony of the moral universe. No power on earth or in heaven can defeat the purpose of God to bring every thing into subjection to himself; in other words, to be the actual and the actually recognized Master in his own dominions. The

process by which this result is to be secured is neither violent nor mechanical ; but it springs out of those natural relations which God has established between the different parts of his economy. It involves, to be sure, the happiness of souls ; but happiness is reached only through voluntary obedience. Righteousness, in reality, is the end ; happiness is only an incident. The thing which God demands of every soul is rectitude, moral purity, spiritual submission. This is the end towards which he works, and there will be no pauses until the end is reached.

It will not do to say that man's freedom may defeat the beneficent intentions of the Almighty ; for that would be a poor sort of freedom which practically dooms men to endless sin. Nor will it do to affirm that the power of evil habit may become so strong that it will be impossible for men any more to choose effectually the right. That would be to contradict every theory on which the recovery of souls is sought in this world ; the universal assumption being that no case is so desperate as to be beyond the saving efficacy of infinite grace. This position, which is the last refuge of modern Orthodoxy, savors both of fatalism and atheism. It is fatalistic in so far as it fixes, beyond all hope of amendment, the condition of any soul. It is atheistic in so far as it puts the final destiny of man entirely in his own keeping. Equally futile is the claim that death determines the moral condi-

tion of humanity. For it is absurd to suppose that death will change either the nature of man or the disposition and purpose of God. So long as man is man, he may forsake evil and embrace righteousness ; so long as God is God, he will certainly restore the penitent and welcome the returning prodigal. It only remains to look at the object which has been steadily pursued in the giving of the Law and the promulgation of the Gospel, to feel assured that the poet manifests a profoundly philosophical insight when he sings : —

“ I can but trust that good shall fall,
At last — far off — at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.”

In one vast, resistless movement, the whole creation sweeps towards the grand finality of universal holiness and universal love.

The foregoing are only the more prominent features of a great system. Taken together, they constitute what may be called the Universalist idea. Unquestionably, this idea meets the demands of a sound philosophy. It not only does no violence to the intellect and the moral sentiments, but it completely answers all their requirements.

It is essential that a system, to be philosophical, should rigidly conform to the laws of thought. No affront must be offered to the faculties. No impossible task must be demanded of the intelligence. But every postulate

must commend itself to the dictates of an enlightened reason. Not only must the separate propositions be able to stand the test of the severest intellectual criticism, but the whole doctrinal fabric must be such that, when turned about on every side, the keenest scrutiny can find no flaw or blemish in it. Like a perfect armor, the different parts must so fit together that the fiercest antagonist can find no place through which he can thrust his remorseless lance. Then, if it serves the purpose it was intended to serve, fills the place it was meant to fill, does the work it was fashioned to do, and is not out of joint with the known ways and works of God, whatever its shortcomings in other respects, on the side of thought at least no impeachment can be made of its philosophy.

Let us pause here for a moment. What do the laws of thought require?

The first requisite is clearness. It would seem sometimes as if men believed the opposite of this, — as if when a subject is involved in an obscurity as dense as a Newport fog it is philosophical; or as if when it is chaotic or nebulous, without any organic centre, and floats before the mind in a dim and dream-like way, it is philosophical. But no philosophy which could stand the jolts and jars of time was ever made out of such flimsy material. Clearness is the only plank that will bear the strain. But the Universalist idea, as I have sketched it, does not fail in

this particular. No mist of uncertainty or doubt obscures its outlines; no vague and formless opinion, no unintelligible or random thought, helps to make up the body of its doctrine. The system as a whole stands forth to the eye of the mind as clearly and sharply defined as a mountain peak against the western sky in a cloudless morning.

Nor is the law of clearness violated in any of its component parts. The notion of an all-powerful, all-wise, just, beneficent God, who is at once Creator and Father, and whose fatherly affection and fatherly care are unceasing, is certainly intelligible. The proposition that the Son came voluntarily into our world, lived a human life, taught a divine doctrine, and finally died for the salvation of men, however at fault it may be tried by other tests, is a clear proposition. The doctrine of the Holy Ghost as a living and omnipresent witness of God and Christ, and the operative agent of all divine beneficence and all human saintliness, offers nothing which the thought of man cannot easily and effectively grasp. The view we hold of man as the child of God, peccable but free, with moral instincts and attributes which lead him to respect virtue, with good enough in him to justify the gracious offices of Christ and the Holy Spirit in his behalf, is neither hazy nor nebulous. So, finally, the Universalist doctrine of destiny, pointing to the grand

consummation of universal righteousness, is not open to the charge that it is incomprehensible. True, it is said to be inconceivable that God will finally take the most heinous sinners into the abodes of unending bliss. But that is just what he is said to do under every system that bears the name of Christian. It is said to be utterly against reason that men who have wasted their lives in worldly and wicked ways should be permitted after death to dwell in the mansions of God with the redeemed. But the objection lies against every form of Christian doctrine that has ever been taught among men. The extension of the process from a portion of the race to the whole of it does not alter the principle.

Consider for a moment the reasonableness of the principle. Is it absurd in a moral universe that sinners should be redeemed? If some, why not all? Which, indeed, is the more inconceivable: that holiness, which is at war with sin, should finally prevail, or that evil should be permanently enthroned?—that God, who made man and subjected him to law, should always maintain his ascendancy over him, and through the operation of the law which he ordained for him secure his voluntary submission, or that the creature should finally spurn the Creator, and effectually resist and defy his authority? If the former conception is thought the more reasonable, it is not likely to fail of acceptance from lack of clearness.

But the laws of thought are not properly observed unless a system is self-consistent, — unless its different parts are held together by an unbroken chain. It is possible for many truths, which are at once intelligible and clear, to coexist, and to be thrown very closely together by some principle of association, yet between which there is no vital and necessary connection. A system may be constructed as a mason constructs a wall, — using stones of different sizes and shapes, fitting each one into its proper place, and binding them all together with some artificial material; or it may spring out of certain primal and necessary truths, and grow as the tree grows from the ground according to a principle of vitality inherent in the seed, extracting by the law of assimilation from earth and air the elements that are essential to its development. A system which claims for itself a philosophical basis must be organic.

Here Universalism will be found to bear the test. Its general idea is not at variance with any of the special truths on which it rests, nor is there any conflict between these truths themselves. The whole conception is harmonious. Between premise and conclusion there is not the slightest gap, — the connection is necessary and inevitable. Every process of reasoning which marches straight from a legitimate starting-point to a conclusion cannot fail to find that a Being whose nature is love, and who is

not limited in wisdom or power, will not only purpose the ultimate moral purity of his creatures, but institute measures which will certainly bring it to pass ; not only purpose the destruction of evil and the permanent and perfect triumph of good, but actually secure that result. In like manner, it is necessary to think that the Son of God, who came from heaven to reveal God, to enforce duty, and to point out the destiny of the race, who in this work, and to induce men to accept his doctrine and leadership, voluntarily suffered reproach and death, would leave no essential thing undone which would make his dying declaration, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do," less than the literal and exact truth. Moreover, the conception of the Holy Ghost as the ever living and active agent, working constantly, both in time and in eternity, towards the result which the Father and the Son alike have set out to accomplish, is certainly not illogical. Neither is it inconsistent to suppose that a free creature like man, with penalty always treading relentlessly on the heels of transgression, and with God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and good angels pleading with him to forsake iniquity, should "somehow, somewhere," willingly and eagerly seek the welcoming embrace of a loving God.

Again, the laws of thought require that a philosophical system should not be at variance with the known order of things. If it postulates contradict what we find in nature

or the human soul, we have no right to make them. If it assumes any thing which the course of history, or the actual experience of men, will not justify, its assumptions must perish. Our beliefs must not greatly outrun the regular recurrence of human events; our hopes must ever be fortified by our experience. No theory will command general assent so long as it disregards incontestable facts. What will be must be in conformity with what is, and only from what is may we form any just notion of what will be.

The Universalist faith has nothing to fear from the application of this rule. It does not ask the acceptance of a single principle which is unnatural, or which is open to *a priori* objection. Power, wisdom, goodness, are manifest in the universe; purpose to bless and save runs through all the great religions which have claimed a divine origin; the desire for virtue, the hope of heavenly favor and heavenly bliss, are native to the human mind. Men have observed, it is true, that nature in some of its aspects is cruel, and hence have concluded that cruelty is a permanent factor in the mind of God. But only a very narrow induction could yield so poor a result. It is not strange, perhaps, that Stoicism, which was the most stalwart system of antiquity, should have bowed with equal awe before good and ill, and ascribed them both to fate. But the Stoic was confined in his observation to a very narrow

range of things. He could not take in the vast spaces which the astronomer of our time traverses, and watch the play of law working always to beneficent results in the material universe. He was not cognizant of the immense cycles which are as an open book to our modern geologist, and through which he sees ever order, harmony, beauty, and a higher form of life, constantly emerging. He had not at his command whole sections of human history showing how nations have come into being, lived out their day, performed their work, and then passed for ever from the stage of existence, by means of which the historian of the present time may study the progress of humanity. No wonder if he thought evil was a permanent thing, with nothing to mitigate it. There may be pain in the upheaval of a mountain, in the rush of a cataract, in the swing of planets, in the sweep of cycles, in the blood and carnage of revolution ; but he who perceives that these things are only preparing the way for wider and more permanent blessings will not base upon them an accusation against the goodness of God.

It is sometimes affirmed that the Universalist argument, based on the goodness of God, against endless suffering holds against all suffering whatever. We see suffering, it is alleged, here and now ; therefore we have no right to infer that it may not always last. So? Does the mind regard as identical temporary suffering, which may be

punitive and which may be disciplinary, and suffering which is unlimited and without conceivable purpose or possible end? Properly interpreted, Universalism is not inconsistent with things that are.

If we add to the laws of pure thought the laws of ethics, our faith will be strengthened, and not weakened. An essential part of man's nature is moral. Therefore a religion which will fully meet the natural wants of man must be such as his conscience can approve. Conscience which gives us the sense of right, justice, goodness, truth, virtue, judges, not only with reference to our own conduct and that of our fellow-men, but with reference to the moral quality in the constitution and course of things. Religion makes its first appeal to the mind through the conscience. The reason for this is evident. The moral nature of man is that in which he most nearly resembles his Creator. While conscience as the source of our moral ideas carries with it its own authority and obligation, it is constantly pointing to something that is above and beyond. It is seeking ever to clarify and perfect its judgments by a nearer view of the eternal rectitude, by those indications of God's will which are to be found in nature and the soul. Our very confidence in our own moral judgments comes from our faith in the absolute rectitude of him who gave us our moral sense. We believe that the test by which we measure both our-

selves and others is safe and trustworthy, because it has been given to us by One who is perfectly infallible. For the same reason, also, we have confidence in the test when, by means of it, we seek to determine what we should naturally expect of a government instituted and carried on by the Parent and Fountain of all virtue. We cannot believe that the conduct and character of God will vary in principle from that which makes conduct and character meritorious in man. If we are asked to believe anything which conflicts thus with the legitimate action of our moral faculty we shall be justified in refusing.

Precisely what are we compelled, by our moral constitution, to believe in respect of God and his government? There is no question what we are obliged to believe with reference to ourselves. Nothing can efface from our minds the conviction that sin is terrible, odious, abominable. No amount of schooling or practice in iniquity can weaken the force of this conviction. True, by repeated indulgence the moral sense may become somewhat callous ; but its callousness will be like the callousness of the stone-cutter's hand, which when the horny cuticle is torn away is more sensitive than ever. We not only believe in the "exceeding sinfulness of sin," but our nature revolts at it ; we loathe it ; we feel bound to make war upon it, to wrestle with it, and to seek its extermination in ourselves and others. We hate it, however, not

merely because it is inherently hateful, but because God hates it, because it is opposed alike by his law and his nature, of which his law is the expression.

The course of moral discipline which renders the most efficient aid to man in his conflict with evil is regarded as at once the most successful and the most godlike. How is it possible for us to believe, then, that God, by the different instrumentalities which he has sanctioned, purposes any thing less than the complete destruction of sin? Surely he will not complacently witness the permanent establishment of what he hates, and what he calls upon us to resist and destroy. To affirm that would be to affirm that he is indifferent to what his nature antagonizes and repels. God's government upon its face seems to aim at the destruction of iniquity; and I do not see how it can be called a perfect government, if it fails to do what it sets out to do. If we can reason at all from human analogies, it cannot. The father whose control over his children is such as to keep them from temptation, and train them up to useful and virtuous lives, is the good father. His example is commended as worthy of all imitation. The state that exerts the most beneficial influence upon its citizens, so that its laws are cheerfully obeyed, and so that there is no rebellion and no discord, and only a minimum of crime, is sure to be the admiration of history. But the one particular in which our civiliza-

tion is conceded thus far to be a failure is in its treatment of the criminal classes of society. It is not so much that it does not prevent crime, as that no successful method of reform has yet been instituted. We may restrain the criminal, and make an example of him that will be a terror to evil-doers. But that is hardly thought to be the highest result attainable by a Christian state. The real problem yet to be solved is, how to cure the criminal, — how to transform him into a citizen. In like manner, the moral judgment of mankind will agree that it is scarcely the noblest function of God's discipline to simply punish the sinner, and leave him to his fate.

In reply to Dr. Sawyer's assertion, that God could not leave the sinner finally to himself, without renouncing the moral responsibilities he willingly assumed in his creation, President Porter says: "I would submit that those who concede that God can permit the sin which he hates, and the sinner whom he must punish, to exist at all, cannot assert that God is morally bound not to create a being who he foreknows will sin for ever." The weak point in this objection is, that it fails to recognize any distinction between what is transient and temporary and what is final and endless. I may not, indeed, be able to give any other account of the existence of sin than that is a necessary incident of man's freedom. But what of that? All my moral instincts are not outraged by its presence in the

world, since I have reason to believe that it will ultimately pass away. I can safely leave its existence, therefore, among the secret things that belong to God. But to say that sin is here as a finality, and that there is no hope for the sinner either in time or eternity, is to take a purely pagan view of life, is to leave the Christian element entirely out, or to make so poor a use of it that it is practically worthless, and to put a strain upon the moral sense which very few persons of tender conscience can endure. "The enigma of life, with its sorrows and joys, its smiles and tears," is not only unsolved, but is darker than ever before.

The view here taken is immeasurably strengthened by the fact that the progress of our Christian civilization is all in this direction. The further men advance in the application of Christian truth, the further they are from that practical dualism which makes Augustinianism or Calvinism so repulsive and awful. The time was when theologians serenely contemplated the consignment of the larger part of the human race to endless suffering. The time was when the leading lights of Christendom did not hesitate to divide the moral universe between God and the Devil, giving the Devil by far the larger part. To-day all this is reversed ; and it is not only the prevailing opinion in the Church, but the thought of the most prudent teachers in the Orthodox party, that the number who will

be finally lost, compared to the sum total of humanity, is very insignificant. Not only so, but those who are the most reluctant to accept the terrible notion of endless suffering, or endless sin, are the persons whose moral nature is the keenest and most active, and who are the most deeply imbued with the spirit and flavor of Christianity. How are we to account for this? Can it be that Christianity in its practical development is at war with its essential principles? Can it be that the spirit which it infuses into civilization would lead men to question the special truth which is the most important of all for them to know and accept? Can it be that in educating and moulding the moral sense it yields almost inevitably a kind of splendid sentimentalism which makes men incapable of facing the stern realities of life and destiny? A moment of careful reflection must remove the grounds of so desperate an alternative.

There is another portion of man's nature, partly moral, partly intellectual, but more properly perhaps belonging to the department of the feelings, which a perfectly true religion ought to satisfy. There are what may be called the social and humane instincts, of which religion is bound to take some account. Men and women have been set apart in families; and the family relation is the source not only of the tenderest and purest affections, but of the deepest, and in some respects the holiest, joys of life.

Again, families are bound together into communities and states ; and out of the daily neighborly intercourse of man with man, in the discharge of his duties to society and the state, are born countless forms of social amenity and exalted friendship. Something is due to the qualities on which these relations are based and out of which these affections spring. If religion, in its possible outcome, does violence to the most sacred domestic feelings, denies the most precious domestic hopes, and not only wrenches, but demands the extinction of, all domestic instincts, it cannot long command the assent of enlightened judgment. There may be those who will believe it, because they think they find it in the Word of God ; but more will reject at once the teachings of Scripture and all the claims of religion. In like manner, if the noblest forms of self-denial and disinterested human love are wholly overlooked in the ultimate applications of justice, very soon men will begin to question altogether the divine intervention in the whole scheme of things. They will prefer to attribute the allotments of good and ill, in which there is so little to satisfy the native sense of justice, and so much to offend the sympathetic and humane qualities of the soul, to a remorseless fate, and return again to the heroic but terrible consolations of the Stoical philosophy.

But as there is a broader kinship than that of family or neighborhood, so the demands of humane feeling are not

entirely met when every thing has been discharged that is due to those dear ones with whom we share our secret thoughts, and to our fellow-travellers to whom we impart our hopes and fears, and from whom we receive encouragement and sympathy. The Christian religion, which begins with the idea of the fatherhood of God, specifically inculcates the doctrine of human brotherhood. Society is one, the nations are one, the race is one. Nothing that concerns humanity as a whole, nothing that affects any individual member of the race can be treated with indifference by him who seeks to put in practice the spirit and doctrine of Christ. This is the truth which seeks expression in the varied instrumentalities by which law, order, and all the complex relations of social life, are promoted. It is the aim of legislation, the palpable goal of diplomacy, the inspiration of all statesmanship.

But the truth which is inculcated thus by religion, and which meets with such general practical recognition, is receiving scientific confirmation. All linguistic investigations, all studies relating to the fundamental qualities of races and types, all biological observations and inductions, point distinctly to the organic and indestructible unity of mankind. When Christianity teaches, therefore, that "God has made of one blood all nations of men," it is not proclaiming an arbitrary *dictum*, which, however true in the realm of ideas, has no solid basis in the realm of

fact ; but it is giving utterance to one of those principles which history and science alike attest. The inference from this is that, when it is said Christ came to save the world, humanity is meant. The term humanity is inclusive, and not exclusive. It covers not only sects and kingdoms and races, but the individual members which constitute the grand whole. The world, therefore, cannot be said to be saved, unless its different divisions of race are saved. The races are not saved, unless men are saved. But we can go farther even than that, and declare, not merely that humanity is not saved but by the salvation of its different members, but that the individual is not saved except as the whole is saved through the separate persons who compose it.

A brief glance at the actual state of things will illustrate this point. It is true that society cannot reach perfection but through the perfection of those whose relations with each other make up what we term society. But it is equally true that men, under the social law, cannot become even relatively perfect, unless the state in which they find themselves is favorable. The health of my moral nature is sensibly affected by the moral atmosphere I am compelled to breathe. Gross corruptions in the world around me enfeeble my constitution, and hinder me from reaching the summits of possible good. The evil of my neighbor is an unfailing clog upon my own virtue ; and not until purity is

universal can I hope to feel those invigorating influences which will give my moral nature its utmost possible development, bringing me "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." So that it is difficult to conceive how any considerable part of mankind can attain that degree of holiness to which the teaching and sacrifice of Christ seem to point, so long as another part of it is weighed down by a burden of wickedness and woe. The salvation of the world, then, involves the salvation of individual men; the salvation of individuals, in the sense in which Christ meant they should be saved, when he said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me," involves the salvation of the world, using the term world with the broadest and most comprehensive meaning of which it is capable.

Besides these intellectual and moral grounds of Universalism, there are some general considerations which serve to recommend it as the religion which is demanded by the nature of man and the constitution of the world. One of these is the inherent stability of the system. Truth is unchangeable in its essence. The special forms of its manifestation, the dress it wears in different epochs, the methods by which it is inculcated, may vary; but the ground-work and substance of truth itself is unchanging and unchangeable. This always has been and always must be a prominent characteristic of Universalism.

Other systems have changed in their fundamental ideas and doctrines; and their more candid advocates will frankly admit the changes they have undergone, and even point them out with feelings of pride and exultation. From almost all the older creeds the elements of vindictiveness and fate have been eliminated, and in the place of them moral persuasiveness and infinite love have been inserted. Apart from the historic continuity of the churches that even now formally hold such creeds, we should not be able to recognize them as theirs by any thing in the thought and life of to-day. Indeed, in many of their more prominent features we could scarcely distinguish them from our own broad and beneficent view. No more convincing proof is needed of their native weakness.

To be sure, Universalism has changed in some of its aspects. It has given up the bald literalness which characterized some of its earlier interpretations of Scripture, and abandoned much that was mechanical in its philosophy. It has moved up to a higher stage of thought and life. It takes broader and more comprehensive views. It employs more complicated and flexible methods. It has attained a larger and deeper spiritual insight. But these changes are only superficial. They affect little more than the vesture of the doctrine. The essential features are the same. Our views of the nature and purposes of God, of

the offices of Christ and the Holy Spirit, of the moral constitution and destiny of man, as well as of the process by which human redemption is secured, remain the same. These cannot be changed without destroying the entire body of doctrine which they help to constitute. Herein, then, we have a most important requisite of a sound and durable philosophy. Herein we have abundant reason for believing that our doctrine is at least a part of eternal verity ; since it conforms to those laws by which the truth is handed down, without alteration or amendment, from generation to generation and from age to age.

It is enough to call attention to one other phase of the Universalist philosophy, which certainly holds no unimportant place among the reasons which recommend it as the religion of humanity. It is a harmonious system. It builds ever, not only on the indivisible unity of God, but on the indivisible unity of man. It points to the harmonious relations of moral truths and moral laws. All other systems fail just here. Practically, they destroy even the unity of God, since they compel him to divide the moral universe with a principle of evil, which is as absolute within its proper sphere and as durable as his own nature. They break the human race into sections, putting a barrier between them which they cannot pass ; separating thus, according to some mysterious principle of discrimination, not only great masses of men, but neighborhoods and

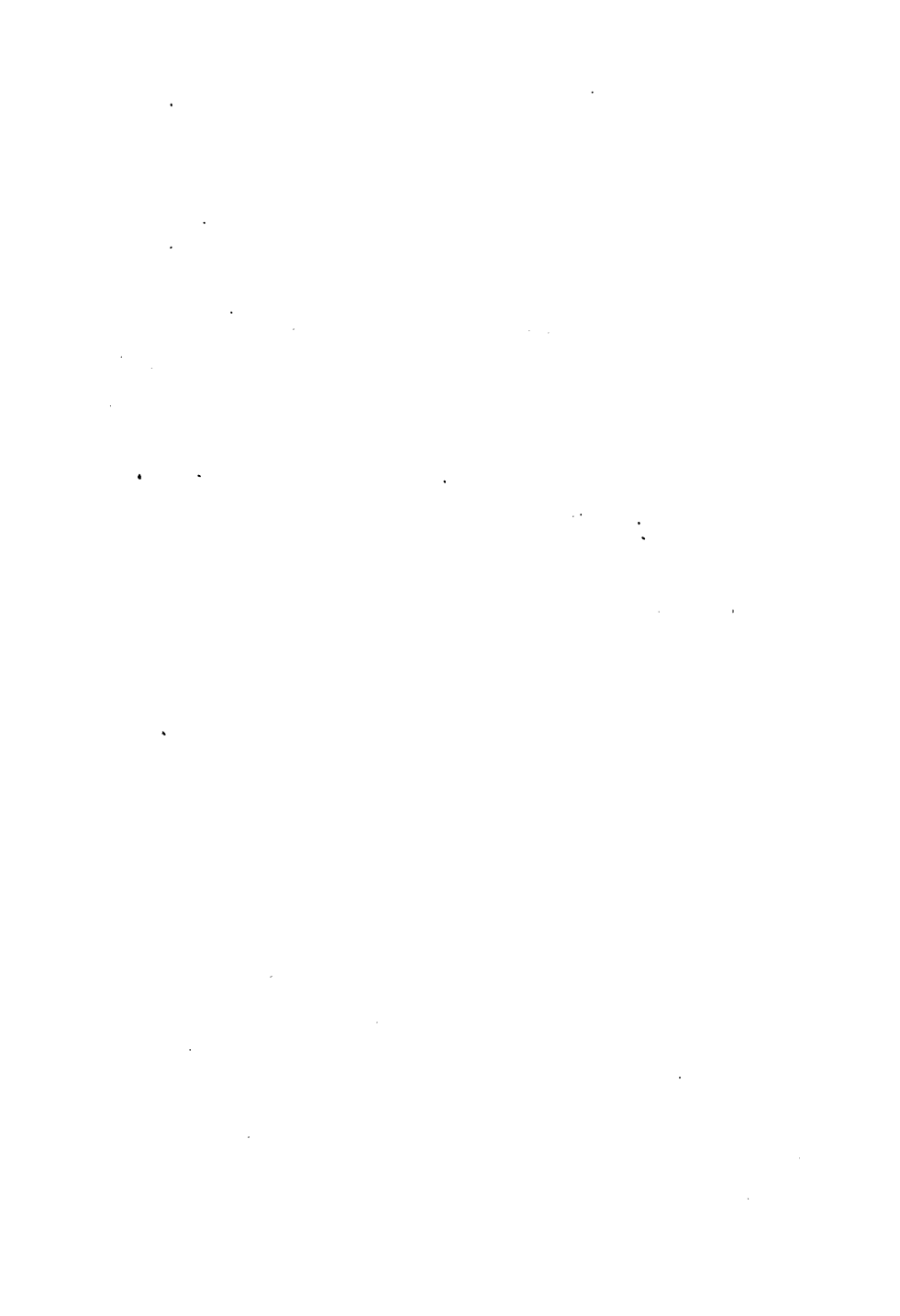
families, snapping asunder with remorseless insensibility the most delicate tendrils of the human heart. They perpetuate discord. They exalt and glorify confusion and moral chaos. For certainly there can be no union between God and sin: he will not join hands with what he hates with infinite hatred, or give his approval to what he is exerting himself to the utmost to destroy. Neither can there be any harmony between saints and sinners, between heaven and hell. But who that thinks of God, as the Universalist faith conceives him, as a Being infinite in wisdom and power, perfectly just, perfectly true, inexhaustibly tender, "doing his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth," — can for a moment feel that the universe is moving towards any such result, can believe that the Creator and Governor of men will rest contented with any thing less than the conquest and destruction of evil, through the obedience and holiness of souls? With unbroken confidence, growing stronger and stronger with every trial of it, we look for the reign of universal righteousness, for the ultimate triumph over sin, and over the sinful affections of humanity, of a loving God.

Thus the Universalist idea meets every test by which a form of religious philosophy must be tried. It quails not under the application of the laws of thought. It answers the severest demands of the conscience, and awakens a

welcome response in the moral instincts of the human heart. It is humane ; charged with the tenderest charity and the broadest philanthropy. It is permanent and durable as the substance of truth and the nature of God. It is harmonious ; keeping in view forever —

“ One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.”











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